Part Two

War, Depression, and Industrial Unionism

1914–1946

WHEN THE FIRST U.S. ARMY TROOPS landed in war-ravaged Tokyo early in September 1945, they were commanded by scores of young officers, many born just before World War I. These confident commanders, ex-civilians still in their thirties, had been part of a vast wartime expansion of American power to almost every corner of the globe. But their memories stretched back to the grim Depression years, to high school in the 1920s, and to childhood memories of World War I itself. This generation experienced a transformation in American life that was as dramatic and fundamental as any since the founding of the Republic. When they attended elementary school, the nation's social and political rhythms were still attuned to those of a nineteenth-century agrarian world; by the time they learned that B-29 bombers had dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, U.S. diplomacy, politics, and society had far more in common with the end of the twentieth century than with its start.

In just one-third of a century, from 1914 to 1945, Americans fought two world wars, survived the Great Depression, and saw the emergence of the most powerful trade union movement in the nation's history. As war and revolution convulsed countries around the globe, politics became saturated with debate over the great "isms" of the twentieth century: imperialism, capitalism, socialism, fascism, and communism. The federal government became far more powerful but also more intimately involved with the lives of ordinary Americans. Women got the vote, African Americans demanded their right to vote, and immigrant Americans began to exercise the franchise in huge numbers. New modes of communication, consumption, and transport—movies, radio, chain stores, buses and cars—recast the texture of everyday life.

Four great developments transformed the United States and its place in the world during this third of a century. First, the United States became the world's greatest power, in terms both of its economic infrastructure and its military influence overseas. In 1914, the United States was already the productive equal of Great Britain and Germany; but whereas both world wars sapped the economic vitality of the European combatants—and decimated an entire generation of young men—the American republic emerged from each conflict with ever greater economic and military strength. U.S. industry perfected mass production, put an automobile in the driveway of most families, and developed the kind of technologies—such as aviation, radar,

telecommunications, and nuclear fission—that paid off in time of war. Early in 1941, *Life* magazine publisher Henry Luce proclaimed this era "the American Century." Indeed, by the end of World War II, the relative power of the United States recalled the strength of Great Britain at the high noon of its Victorian empire or Rome in the reign of the Caesars.

Second, the federal government became enormously more powerful during these three short decades. In 1914, the post office was perhaps the only agency of the national government that touched the lives of ordinary Americans. But war and depression soon changed all that. U.S. participation in World War I proved a dress rehearsal not just for the next world conflict, but also for the transformative, intrusive impact of the New Deal fifteen years later. During the First World War, the Wilson administration mobilized the American people as never before: government regulated business, took over the railroads, tested and trained millions of military recruits, censored the mail, and sold war bonds in a huge propaganda effort to gain public support for the battles overseas. In the 1920s, Republican presidents tempered the growth of federal power, but even in that more conservative decade, President Herbert Hoover, who had been a highly effective World War I administrator, argued for the kind of nation-state activism that would have surprised his nineteenth-century predecessors.

Many veterans of World War I, including Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt, would deploy this same kind of organizational energy and ambition when the nation faced its next great crisis, the Great Depression. The Roosevelt administration's New Deal built dams and roads; subsidized millions of farmers; regulated corporations, banks, and the stock market; and established Social Security, which would eventually become the single largest, most expensive, and, for many years, most popular of all government programs. Then came World War II, when the federal government achieved stupendous size and power: it raised an army and navy of sixteen million; it mobilized the nation's leading universities for military research; and it launched the industrialization of previously rural or residential areas, such as southern California, large sections of the agricultural South, and Long Island. By 1944, the military was spending more than 40 percent of the nation's entire gross domestic product.

Third, these were the years during which the labor movement moved to the center ring of American politics and culture. This took place in two stages, during both of which rank-and-file activism and government policy combined to generate an explosive growth in union size and influence. During World War I, the Wilson administration repressed antiwar radicals, but to advance U.S. war aims, the government also linked victory over German autocracy to the spread of an industrial democracy at home. American workers were therefore emboldened to denounce their employers as "Prussian" managers and "Kaiserism" in industry, and they joined unions in

a vast wave that crested during the nationwide strikes of 1919, the largest working-class upheaval in the history of the republic.

Fifteen years later, industrial unionism finally won the kind of political support and legislative backing that had been absent during the First World War. The 1935 Wagner Act encouraged trade unionism as a spur to economic recovery and a bulwark of American democracy. But no matter how favorable the law was to labor, the mass unionism of the 1930s required the courageous activism of thousands of women and men. Organizing the biggest industries of their time—automobiles, steel, rubber, and electrical products—they built the new Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and put its power and values close to the heart of a New Deal impulse that stretched well into the post–World War II years.

Fourth, this era of war and depression generated a remarkable transformation in the character of the American people. Although shipping shortages and dangers during the First World War—and the immigration restriction laws that followed—stanched the great transatlantic migrations, the impact of that European diaspora would have a lasting effect on their new country. In the 1930s and 1940s, the sons and daughters of the prewar immigrant wave—the ambitious, assimilationist "second generation"—helped to reestablish the Democratic Party; gave new energy to the labor movement; and poured creativity into science, film, and music. Immigrant daughters figured prominently in the labor upsurge of the 1930s, but women of all backgrounds took advantage of new opportunities in industry and offices. They streamed into jobs that were vacated by men during the two world wars and began to stay in the workforce longer. In 1914, the typical woman worker was an unmarried teenager; after 1945, she was married and in her twenties or thirties.

Southerners both black and white also poured into the industrial workplace. Fleeing a generation-long agricultural depression, many white southerners moved north during the 1920s and 1930s. But the wartime "Great Migration" of African Americans proved even more dramatic. Starting in the First World War and renewing itself in the Second, a huge exodus out of the rural South swelled the African American population of Chicago, New York, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Detroit, and Oakland, California, moving the aspirations of this community toward the center of U.S. politics. In 1914, African Americans were voiceless and hidden behind a veil of nearly unchallenged white supremacy. Thirty years later, a vigorous civil rights movement, powerfully reinforced by hundreds of thousands of black factory workers, had begun to challenge the old racial order on almost every front.

6

Wars for Democracy

1914–1920

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Conclusion: Toward a Postwar Society

IN MID-1918, AS THE CLOUDS of war rolled over the United States, socialist leader Eugene Debs rose from his sickbed to protest the massive government repression that had led to the arrest of thousands of radicals and opponents of U.S. participation in the war. "They tell us that we live in a great free republic," he told a cheering crowd in Canton, Ohio, "that our institutions are democratic, that we are a free and self-governing people. This is too much, even for a joke." Debs knew his own remarks placed him at risk of arrest, but he insisted he "would rather a thousand times . . . be a free soul in jail than . . . be a sycophant and coward in the streets." Rejecting the claim that the United States was fighting "to make democracy safe in the world," Debs believed that wars were waged for conquest and plunder. "The master class," he insisted, "has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives."

Debs was prophetic. As he perhaps expected, he wound up as a "free soul in jail": this very exercise of free speech led to a ten-year sentence for violating the 1917 Espionage Act. And while munitions makers and a small number of other corporations grew rich from what would later be known as World War I, millions, most of them from the "subject class," died. Ten million people (including 112,000 U.S. soldiers) perished; twice that number died from hunger and disease attributable to the war. Rather than making the world safe for democracy, as President Woodrow Wilson had asserted, the bungled peace enacted at the end of the so-called War to End All Wars would pave the way for a second, even deadlier world war.

No Man's Land
A soldier's corpse, caught on one of the barbed-wire barricades that crisscrossed European battlefields during the First World War, hangs unburied between the trenches of the opposing armies. Imperial War Museum.

But like most political speakers, Debs painted on a broad canvas. In hindsight, we can see that the war years brought vital gains as well as grievous losses for ordinary Americans. Workers benefited from the labor shortage that developed as war production increased. Rural black southerners moved north to fill industrial positions. The flow of immigration from Mexico swelled. Women made their way into traditionally male jobs. With jobs easy to get, workers won better wages and conditions and recognition of their unions. From below, workers, immigrants, women, and African Americans pressed the meaning of a war for democracy beyond the boundaries that President Wilson had intended.

The victory of the United States and its allies in the war seemed to open up further promises not only of a new and fairer social order, but also of greater economic and social democracy. Unions staged massive strikes to redeem the idea of economic democracy; African Americans proclaimed their rights to long-delayed civic equality. But the postwar strikes met defeat at the hands of repressive employers, and a government-sponsored "Red scare" soon crushed most signs of radicalism. Whites beat and killed newly assertive African Americans in a series of brutal race riots. By 1920, many Americans would have agreed with the imprisoned Debs that World War I had neither enshrined democracy around the world nor advanced it more than modestly at home.

World War I Comes to Europe

In the summer of 1914, Europe plunged into a devastating conflict, known then as the Great War and later as World War I. For the next four years, the Allies (France, Great Britain, and Russia) and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy) faced each other in a horrific standoff. Industrialization provided new weapons of destruction that killed more than nine million people in battle while millions more died from war-related disease and hunger.

From Assassination in the Balkans to War in Europe On June 28, 1914, Gavrilo Princip, a Serbian nationalist, assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne. Less than three weeks after the assassination, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, and European nations joined in, declaring their loyalty to one side or the other. Russia quickly came to Serbia's aid, and Germany rushed to Austria-Hungary's defense by attacking France, Russia's ally. The next day, Britain joined the conflict on behalf of both France and neutral Belgium, which had come under attack by German troops. Within five weeks, virtually all of Europe was at war.

How did a single shot from an unknown terrorist set in motion a conflagration that would leave millions of people dead? Part of the answer lies in the intense ethnic and nationalist rivalries in the Balkans in southeastern Europe. The nineteenth century had seen the decay of the long-standing Turkish Ottoman Empire and the rise of nationalist sentiment and conflicts among the different ethnic groups living in the Balkan: Serbs, Croatians, Bosnians, Montenegrins, and others. These conflicts would not have led to global war had they not played into larger European tensions. Rising nationalism posed a fundamental threat to Austria-Hungary's already crumbling multicultural empire; Serbian expansionism would further stir up those nationalist aspirations. Even more important, Russia—a fierce defender of the Serbs—and Austria-Hungary sat on opposing sides of two sets of alliances that had emerged in Europe in the previous half-century: the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy and the Triple Entente of France, Great Britain, and Russia. These competing alliances fostered an arms race in which each major power feared falling behind its rivals (Map 6.1).

This lethal mix—ethnic tensions, nationalism, global imperial ambitions, escalating militarism, and a convoluted system of alliances and treaties, many of them secret—proved explosive. When Germany decided to back Austria-Hungary against Serbia and Russia, the die was cast. Neither the Allies (Britain, France, and Russia) nor the German-led Central Powers could or would back down. The chain reaction that followed would turn a seemingly obscure incident into a war that was more terrifying and destructive than anything Europe had ever seen.

Total War in Europe Even though the Allies and the Central Powers each confidently predicted a quick victory, the war turned into a gruesome stalemate. By fall of 1914, the French and British had stopped the German advance toward Paris in northeastern France in a narrow strip of land known as the Western Front, where millions of troops fought from a vast network of parallel trenches filled with mud and rats. Machine guns mowed down soldiers who were ordered "over the top," out of the trenches, in a "no man's land" strung with barbed wire to separate the opposing front lines. During 1915 and 1916, both sides tried to break through enemy lines. The German attack on Verdun, France, in February 1916 involved unprecedented firepower. Ten months and almost 700,000 deaths later, the position of the front had barely changed. The new strategy became one of wearing down the enemy in an intentional war of attrition. In July, the British launched an offensive on the Somme River; 19,000 soldiers died on just the first day. Before the attack ended (and the Allies gained a pathetic 125 miles of mud), casualties on both sides would exceed one million.

MAP 6.1 Europe at the Beginning of World War I
The Central Powers, or Triple Alliance countries, were bound by the Allied Powers and could barely contain the rising ethnic nationalism within their borders. Although Italy and Romania had been allies of Austria-Hungary in previous years, they initially declared neutrality and later joined the Allied Powers. Bulgaria, originally a neutral nation, joined the Central Powers in 1915.

For the European participants, World War I meant "total war," a phrase suggesting the war's global character, exceptional intensity, and utter destructiveness. The armed forces on each side required huge mountains of supplies and equipment, provided by the new technologies and large-scale production of the industrial age. Well-developed railways and telegraph lines made it possible to move and manage these mass armies; long-range artillery and rapid-fire infantry weapons multiplied their firepower. Machine guns, flamethrowers, tanks, and chemical weapons such as poison gas changed warfare forever. Airplanes and zeppelins dropped bombs from the sky. At sea, submarines altered traditional naval strategy with their stealth, surprise, and capacity for sudden destruction.

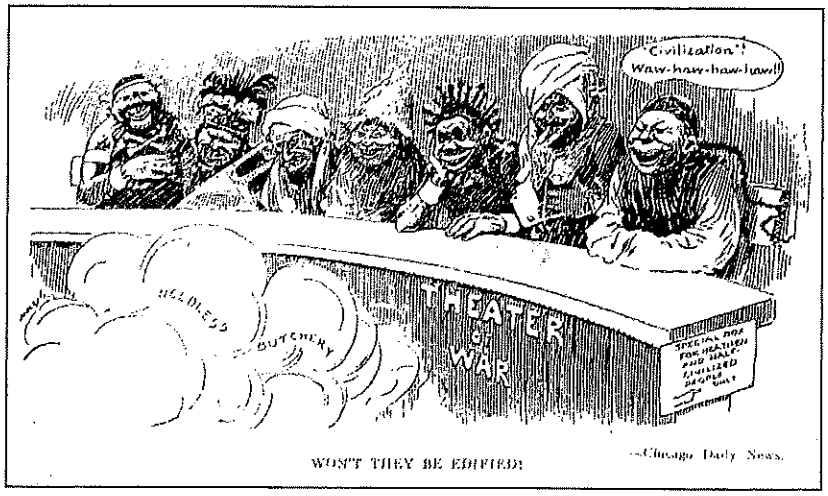
Crucial to these operations were the working men and women who labored on the "home front" to produce the materials that were used in this prolonged conflict. These workers and other civilians became, for the first time, "legitimate" military targets. Each side bombed cities from the air and blockaded or shelled ports and seaside resorts. The blockades cut off food

supplies, causing widespread malnutrition and vulnerability to disease among civilians, especially the young and the old.

The War in America

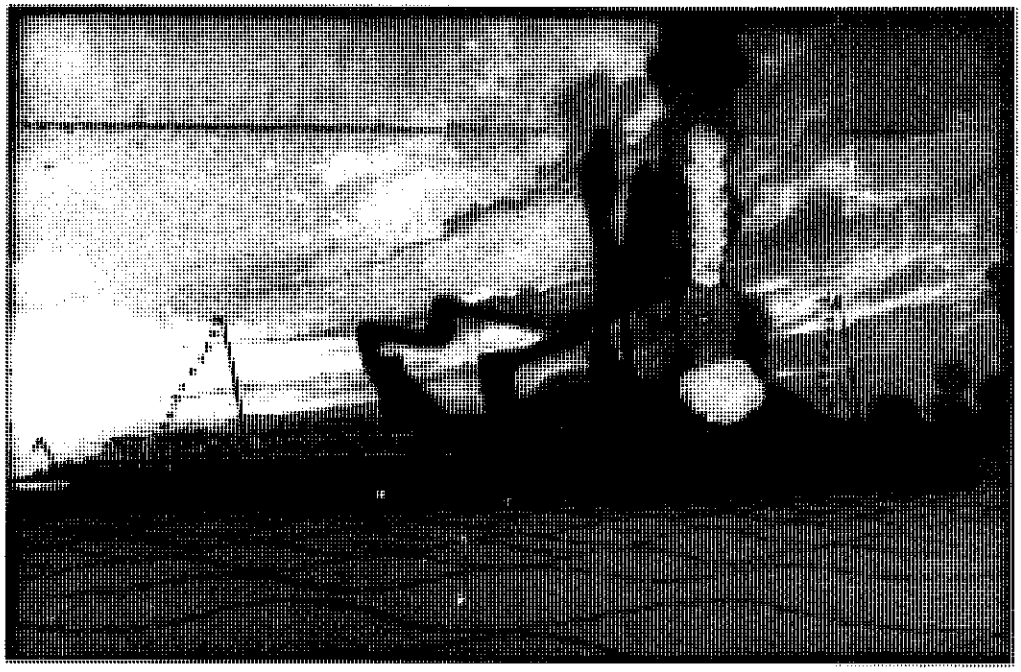
Initially, America benefited from the catastrophe engulfing Europe. Its demand for food and weapons proved profitable for the United States, stimulating the economy and pulling it out of recession. But the profits of wartime commerce inevitably drew the United States into the conflict, particularly as Germany viewed the pro-British tilt in American trade and loans as a growing threat. Although Americans were deeply divided in their allegiances and their views of the European conflict, the German use of submarine warfare against "neutral" commerce finally pulled the United States into the war on the side of the Allies. After the American declaration of war in April 1917, the federal government mobilized not just militarily but also ideologically by suppressing dissent and economically by taking a more active hand in the economy than it had in more than half a century.

Neutrality and American Business In 1914, Wilson's administration urged strict U.S. neutrality. The war seemed to have little to do with the United States, which confined its international activity to the Caribbean, South and Central America, and the Pacific. But the war drew in U.S. citizens who carried goods from the United States to Europe, traveled on American and European ships, and did business with the warring governments and their citizens. Both sides turned to the United States to finance the war: the British sold Americans more than $3.5 billion worth of investments they had in the United States, and the Allies borrowed over $2 billion from American banks and the federal government. By the end of the war, the United States had reversed its historic position as a debtor nation and become a net lender. New York was well on its way toward replacing London as the world's financial capital, and the United States was on the verge of becoming the world's strongest economy.



Won't They Be Edified!
A 1914 cartoon published in the *Chicago Daily News* used racial chauvinism to condemn the European war for undermining the moral supremacy of "Western civilization." *Chicago Daily News*, 1914 — American Social History Project.

Much of the money the United States loaned European nations came back immediately in payment for food, raw materials, and manufactured goods. J. P. Morgan & Co., the exclusive purchasing agent for England and France, placed more than $3 billion worth of wartime orders. As the conflict dragged



Animated Propaganda
Winsor McCay became famous for his comic strips, notably his whimsical and architecturally extravagant *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, and pioneering animated cartoons such as his 1914 *Gertie the Dinosaur*. McCay's 1918 *The Sinking of the Lusitania* was a milestone in the history of animation with its detailed and grim depiction of the event that departed from the simple slapstick standard of contemporary cartoons. It also marked the creation of a new, effective tool for mobilizing popular sentiments in a time of war. American Social History Project.

on, U.S. businesses developed stronger ties to England and France and a greater economic stake in their victory. Between August 1914 and March 1917, the United States sold the Allies about $2.2 billion in armaments—an amount nearly equal to the value of all American exports in 1913. It also shipped iron, steel, copper, and oil to the Allies, paid for by loans from U.S. bankers. By 1917, the nation's gross national product—the sum of all the goods and services the United States produced—rose 20 percent higher than that three years earlier.

But war profits also posed a problem. Under international law, the belligerents could intercept and detain neutral ships, inspect them, confiscate goods they considered contraband, and remove enemy personnel. The United States, which based its foreign policy on freedom of the seas, found neutrality difficult to maintain in this total war. Countless supplies were needed to sustain massive armies and civilians, and each side tried to prevent neutral countries from supplying its enemies. In February 1915, the British navy, the most powerful in the world, began turning back ships carrying war-related goods, including food, to Germany. The Germans retaliated with their new Unterseeboot, or U-boat, launching surprise submarine attacks on Allied ships.

Incidents involving Americans became inevitable, and the clash occurred in May 1915, when 128 Americans died as a German U-boat torpedoed the British passenger ship *Lusitania*, which was rumored to be carrying contraband, off the Irish coast. Responding to a huge public outcry, the United States protested immediately. The Germans, unwilling to push the

United States into the war on the Allied side, expressed regret and agreed to respect international agreements on naval warfare.

Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan urged Wilson to avoid any appearance of taking sides in the European conflict and even recommended breaking commercial ties with the combatants. The president refused, arguing that the United States had to maintain free trade and freedom of the seas and that submarine warfare was immoral, a clear reason to oppose Germany. Bryan—one of the few members of the administration who was genuinely committed to neutrality—resigned over Wilson's reaction to the *Lusitania* affair. The British blockade, Bryan insisted, was equally immoral, because it was starving Germany's civilian population, and he warned that Wilson's actions would lead to war. Bryan's successor, the pro-British Robert Lansing, believed as early as 1915 that the United States "would ultimately become an ally of Great Britain." Lansing's appointment further skewed U.S. policy toward the Allies.

The Debate over American Involvement Increasingly, the war presented Americans with a profound dilemma. Wilson agreed with most business and political leaders that continued U.S. prosperity and tranquility depended on international investment and trade. The main obstacle, in his view, was European-style imperialism—the competitive rush for colonies and exclusive spheres of influence that had secured European domination of world markets and, indeed, the world's people. Wilson opposed high tariffs and advocated an international free-trade system. U.S. producers, Wilson explained in 1912, "have expanded to such a point that they will burst their jackets if they cannot find a free outlet to the markets of the world." Wilson meant his policies not simply to aid industry and raise the standard of living in the United States; a devout Presbyterian, he also saw the spread of free trade and democratic capitalism as a concrete expression of Christian values.

The war that was raging in Europe epitomized the very sort of imperialism Wilson detested, and violations of neutral rights now threatened U.S. peace. The United States faced no immediate military threat. But the president sympathized emotionally and ideologically with Great Britain and feared that an Allied defeat would make Germany a dangerous economic and military rival and an opponent of the U.S. Open Door policy. Furthermore, he worried that a neutral America would be powerless to help shape the postwar world and ensure the openness of world markets to what he called "righteous conquest" by American business.

The public was deeply divided over the war. One in nine Americans had been born in a Central Powers country or had a parent who was born there. German Americans generally favored the Central Powers; those with British

"Let the Capitalists Do Their Own Fighting"

Eugene Debs, industrial union leader and Socialist Party presidential candidate, expressed an intense antiwar attitude in this August 1914 editorial in the working-class newspaper National Rip-Saw. *Radicals and socialists opposed the war believing it resulted from inevitable capitalist rivalry for international markets and raw materials.*

The capitalists tell us it is patriotic to fight for your country and shed your blood for the flag. Very well! Let them set the example.

It is their country; they own it and therefore according to their logic it is their patriotic duty to fight and die for it and be brought home riddled with bullets and covered with flowers as shining examples of patriotic duty to the youth of the nation. . . .

You never had a country to fight for and never will have as much as an inch of one as long as you are fool enough to make a target of your bodies for the profit and glory of your masters.

Let the capitalists do their own fighting and furnish their own corpses and there will never be another war on the face of the earth.

Frederick C. Griffin, *Six Who Protested: Radical Opposition to the First World War* (1977).

backgrounds tended to back the Allies. Most Irish Americans, though no special friends of Germany, opposed aid to Britain. Their opposition intensified—as did the struggle for independence in Ireland—after the British crushed the abortive Easter Rebellion of 1916. Nonetheless, when war broke out, the strongest impulse in America was for peace. Peace forces mobilized activists who had previously focused on the domestic reforms favored by progressives.

Across the country, people rallied to oppose U.S. intervention in the conflict. Many radicals and reformers argued that war would suspend domestic reform, endanger civil liberties, and profit big business. Some activists joined an internationalist movement that promoted world order based on international law. Those who opposed the war included the midwestern progressives, such as George Norris and Robert La Follette, and a large bloc of Democratic congressional representatives from the South and the Midwest. William Jennings Bryan, commenting on what he saw as the pro-British, prowar bias of the East Coast, complained to his daughter that "the president does not seem to realize that a great part of America lies on the other side of the Allegheny Mountains." Most feminists and suffragists also opposed the war. Jane Addams and Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, together founded the Women's Peace Party, which attracted 40,000 members.

Singing Against the War: "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier"

One of the hit songs of 1915, "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier," by lyricist Alfred Bryan and composer Al Piantadosi, captured widespread American skepticism about joining in the European war. In response to the popularity of this antiwar song, Theodore Roosevelt suggested that the place for women who opposed war was "in China—or by preference in a harem—and not in the United States."

Ten million soldiers to the war have gone,
Who may never return again.
Ten million mothers' hearts must break,
For the ones who died in vain.
Head bowed down in sorrow in her lonely years,
I heard a mother murmur thro' her tears:

Chorus:
I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier,
I brought him up to be my pride and joy,
Who dares to put a musket on his shoulder,
To shoot some other mother's darling boy?
Let nations arbitrate their future troubles,
It's time to lay the sword and gun away,
There'd be no war today,
If mothers all would say,
I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier.

What victory can cheer a mother's heart,
When she looks at her blighted home?
What victory can bring her back,
All she cared to call her own?
Let each mother answer in the year to be,
Remember that my boy belongs to me!

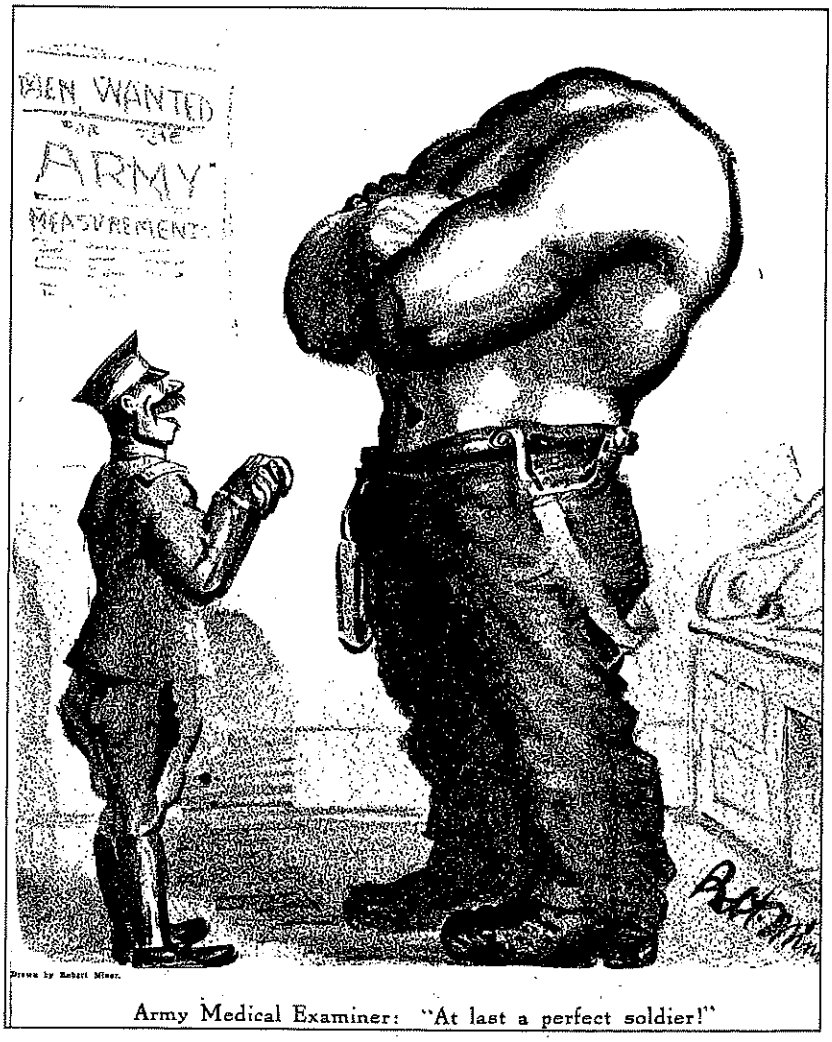
(Chorus)

Al Piantadosi and Alfred Bryan, "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier." Recording: Edison Collection, Library of Congress.

Almost all political and labor radicals opposed U.S. intervention. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, also known as Wobblies), the Socialist Party, and most anarchists denounced the war as an imperialist conflict—rich men sending poor ones to fight for the cause of empire. "We as members of the industrial army," announced the IWW, "will refuse to fight for any purpose except the realization of industrial freedom." Although relatively few Americans belonged to radical organizations, a growing number were sympathetic to their perspective. In 1914, voters from New York City's Lower East Side elected a Socialist to Congress; two years later,

Milwaukeeans elected a Socialist mayor. Tens of thousands of recent immigrants joined Socialist-sponsored ethnic federations.

Americans urging preparedness—a military buildup that would outfit the United States for war—stood at the other extreme. Many advocates of preparedness had ties to banking and commercial interests and therefore strongly backed Britain and France; they anticipated that they would make more money in war profits than in neutral trade. Conservative businessmen used preparedness as a patriotic cover for antiunion, antiradical, and nativist campaigns. Theodore Roosevelt and other militarists argued that military discipline would restore men's masculinity in the same way as the strenuous life of competitive sports and outdoor activity he had long promoted. When "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier" became a popular song in 1915, Roosevelt found it so antithetical to his notion of manhood that he suggested that it was akin to singing, "I Didn't Raise My Girl to Be a Mother." Preparedness sentiment grew particularly strong in the spring and summer of 1916; in May, 137,000 supporters marched in a thirteen-hour procession in New York City. Even labor leader Samuel Gompers, once a pacifist, endorsed preparedness and won appointment to the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense, the group set up by Wilson in the summer of 1916 to develop a mobilization program.



Army Medical Examiner: "At last a perfect soldier!"

A Recruiter's Dream
"At last," an army medical examiner exults, "a perfect soldier!" Robert Minor's cartoon in the July 1916 *The Masses* was published before the United States entered the war. A year later, the magazine's antiwar position would lead to its suppression under the 1917 Espionage Act. Robert Minor, *The Masses*, July 1916 — Tamiment Institute Library, New York University.

Toward Intervention As the debate over the war raged, President Wilson vacillated. After first supporting neutrality, in the fall of 1915 he recommended a military buildup. A few months later, he again switched positions, this time with an eye on the 1916 presidential election. In 1912, Wilson had won the presidency in a three-way contest, with only a minority vote; to be reelected, he would have to woo a sizable bloc of new supporters.

He therefore launched a liberal campaign that was aimed at attracting progressive, labor, and anti-interventionist voters. In 1916, he appointed the progressive leader Louis Brandeis to the U.S. Supreme Court. Next, he supported important bills to benefit labor and farmers. Once the presidential

Babes on Bayonets

Many American newspapers and magazines featured prowar cartoons depicting German atrocities in Belgium. This cartoon appeared in a 1915 edition of the weekly magazine *Life*. The German slaughter in Belgium did not actually occur. By contrast, tens of thousands of Africans had died in the Belgian Congo by 1915, victims of Belgium's ruthless exploitation of its colony's resources.

A. B. Walker, *Life*, 1915 — American Social History Project.

campaign got under way in the summer of 1916, Wilson began to champion the cause of peace. Although his foreign policy positions did not differ much from those of the Republican candidate Charles Evans Hughes, Wilson campaigned on the slogan "He kept us out of war."

This election-year stance won Wilson strong progressive support. Wilson seemed to back everything progressives believed in: an active federal role in upgrading working and living conditions; the settlement of domestic and international conflicts through conciliation rather than war; and, more broadly, the notion of a new world built on principles of rationality and social harmony. Still, Wilson won the popular vote only narrowly, by fewer than 600,000 votes.

Many progressives believed that Wilson's reelection would usher in an era of peace, progress, and social cooperation. Beginning in 1915, Wilson had attempted to play the role of peacemaker, sending his confidant Colonel Edward House on two peace missions to Europe and urging the establishment of an international organization to enforce peace treaties. Operating on the assumption that world peace was linked to domestic stability and the global expansion of American capitalism, Wilson promoted foreign trade. "Go out and sell goods that will make the world comfortable and more happy, and convert them to the principles of America," he told a group of businessmen visiting the White House.

Wilson renewed his peacemaking efforts after the 1916 election, but neutrality became increasingly difficult to sustain. The $10 million a day the Allies were spending in the United States tied Americans ever closer to the British-French alliance. For Wilson, the "moral obligation . . . to keep us out of this war" conflicted with the "moral obligation . . . to keep free the courses of our commerce and finance."

Meanwhile, sensing imminent victory over the Russians on the Eastern Front, the Germans gambled that blocking vital American supplies would bring quick victory on the Western Front. On February 1, 1917, Germany announced the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare. Two days later, Wilson broke diplomatic relations with Germany. Later that month, British intelligence officers intercepted a telegram from the German foreign secretary, Arthur Zimmermann, to Mexican leaders, proposing that if the United States were to enter the war, Mexico should ally itself with Germany to recover its "lost provinces" in the southwestern United States. Although

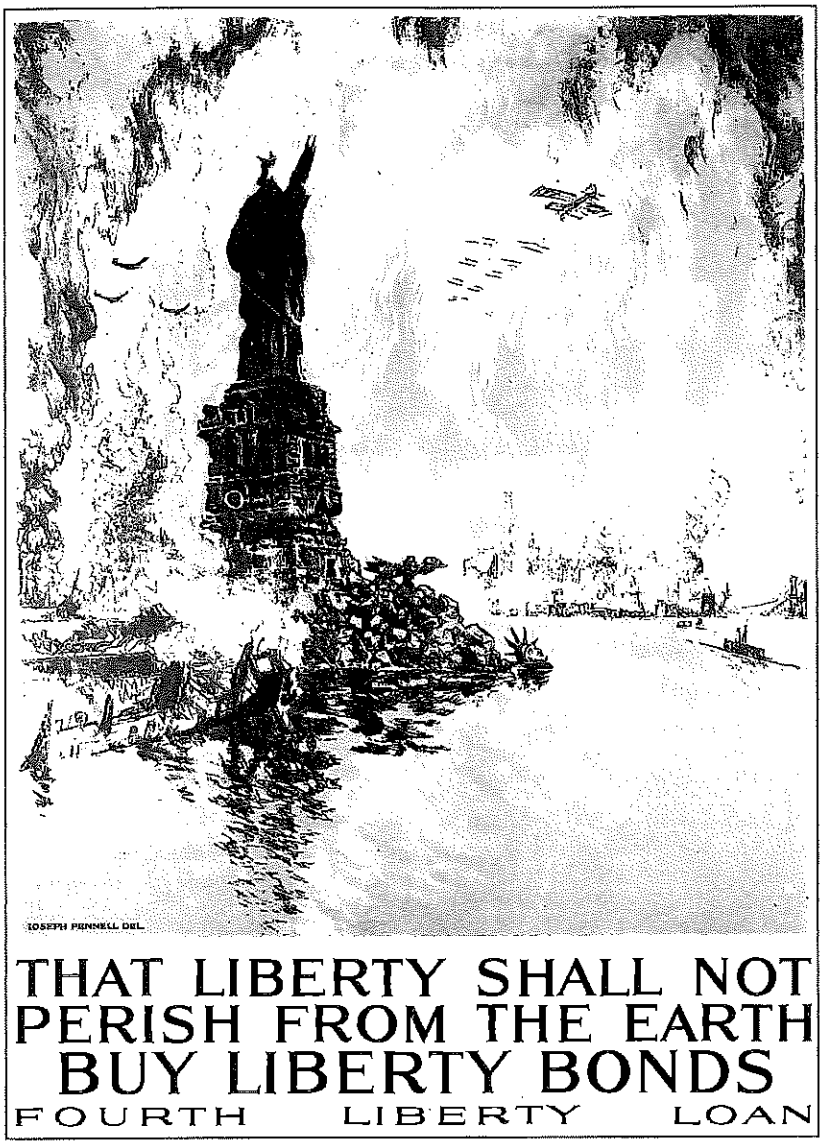
such an alliance was never a real possibility, the Zimmermann telegram further inflamed U.S. public opinion against Germany, especially since it came at a time of unsettled relations with Mexico in the aftermath of that country's 1910 Revolution (see p. 300).

At the same time that Americans began to look more harshly on the Central Powers, they also began to view the Allies more favorably. In March 1917, when Russians replaced their autocratic tsar with a liberal democratic government, Wilson could argue that the Allied cause was the cause of democracy. But what finally moved the president to action was his belief that he had to defend U.S. commerce and that he could have a hand in the peace only by joining in war.

Still, when the president went before Congress on April 2, 1917, to seek a declaration of war, he spoke in soaring tones of the need to make the world "safe for democracy." "We shall fight," he told an applauding Congress, "for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, . . . and [to] make the world itself at last free." Even though commerce and practical politics underlay the decision for war, this democratic rhetoric would inspire many Americans and Europeans during the closing year and a half of the war.

Nevertheless, some Americans remained skeptical. When Congress voted for war four days later, six senators and fifty members of the House of Representatives dissented, including Jeannette Rankin of Montana, the first woman elected to Congress. Some progressives who had supported Wilson joined the antiwar camp, bitterly disillusioned with the president. Ideological opponents of the war included isolationists, internationalists, pacifists, socialists, Wobblies, and agrarian radicals. In local elections held during the summer and fall of 1917, the Socialists did unusually well—an expression, observers felt, of antiwar sentiment. In the Southwest, clandestine tenant farmer groups urged armed resistance to military conscription. "Now is the time to rebel against this war with German boys," read a poster for an abortive antiwar insurrection in eastern Oklahoma, dubbed the Green Corn Rebellion. "Get together, boys, and don't go. Rich man's war. Poor man's fight."

Mobilizing the Home Front Fearing that dissent would hinder the nation's ability to win the war, the Wilson administration launched a prowar propaganda campaign. A week after the declaration of war, Wilson set up the Committee on Public Information (CPI) to sell it. The CPI distributed 75 million pamphlets explaining government policy, placed slick ads in magazines, produced prowar films, and sent out 75,000 speakers to give short talks before any audience they could find, often in movie theaters. As the war went on, the CPI abandoned the pretense that it was a neutral



The Power of Pictures

In the mobilization for war, the U.S. government quickly recognized the power of effective, if often fantastic, imagery to shape public opinion. Most illustrators, and especially editorial cartoonists, eagerly produced prowar work. The government even instituted a Bureau of Cartoons, which issued the weekly *Bulletin for Cartoonists* with suggestions about appropriately patriotic themes and, in some cases, instructions for specific pictures. Joseph Pennell, chromolithograph, c. 1918 — Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

source of information and began to spread exaggerated stories alleging German atrocities.

Employers, civic groups, local governments, and the U.S. Congress eagerly joined the crusade. Steel companies sponsored parades, flag-raising ceremonies, and bond drives. School districts instituted loyalty oaths and offered federally prepared "war study courses." More ominously, Congress passed the Espionage Act (1917) restricting freedom of speech during wartime through harsh penalties for antiwar activity and banning treasonous material from the mails. Congress strengthened the law the next year by adding the Sedition Act, which made it illegal to "utter, print, write or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language" about the government or the military. The government arrested thousands of pacifists and radicals who opposed the war — Eugene Debs among them.

The government also moved to mobilize the nation economically. Through agencies such as the War Industries Board, it took greater charge of the nation's economy than it had at any time since the Civil War. Businessmen literally went to work for the government, attempting to rationalize the economy through cooperative agreements. They worked in federal agencies that determined production priorities, fixed prices, and facilitated orderly operations. This system of government-sponsored industrial self-regulation partially fulfilled the progressive vision of the promotion of social well-being through public-private cooperation. The government also took direct control of a few strategic industries: the Railroad Administration ran the nation's entire railroad system as a single unit, while the Shipping Board managed existing merchant ships and launched a massive shipbuilding program. The Bureau of Indian Affairs encouraged Indians to increase food production on reservations, which brought short-term prosperity to some. Yet the same government policies, which aimed at Indian assimilation into white commercial culture, also hastened the breakup of tribal holdings and ultimately led to a dramatic increase in Indian landlessness.

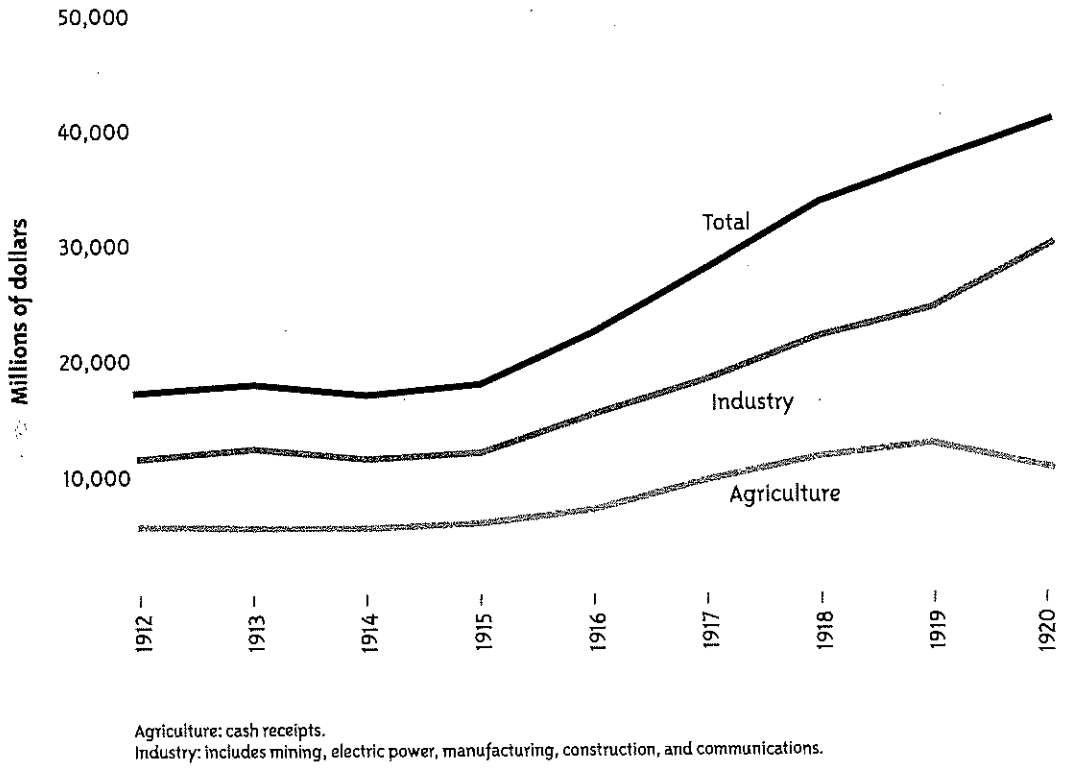
Other wartime agencies increased production by standardizing parts, products, and procedures. Before the war, for example, manufacturers produced typewriter ribbons in 150 different colors; by its end, there were only five. Industrialists expanded their facilities and introduced new production methods, taking advantage of steady wartime demand and "cost-plus" government contracts, which guaranteed a fixed profit plus costs. Thus, the government's military budget subsidized private innovation, laying a foundation for postwar profits.

But the wartime measures with arguably the most lasting significance were the Revenue Acts of 1916 and 1917, which set up a progressive tax on incomes. The Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution (1913) had sanctioned a federal income tax but had affected few Americans and brought in little money. Now, faced with the necessity of raising $33 billion to underwrite the cost of the war—an enormous sum for a federal government that was then relatively small—Wilson and progressive Democrats turned to taxes on incomes and corporate profits as sources of federal revenue. Their approach was progressive because it placed the largest tax burden on the wealthiest individuals and corporations (in contrast to a national sales tax, which would have applied equally to rich and poor). By the end of the war, a corporate excess profits tax was generating $2.5 billion per year—more than half the federal government's tax revenues.

The Expanding Wartime Economy

The wartime economic boom dramatically benefited working people. Union membership skyrocketed, and workers won higher wages and shorter hours. The labor shortage also drew new workers into industrial employment. Rural migrants from the South and Appalachia—both black and white but especially African Americans participating in what came to be called the Great Migration—headed for the cities, where they found better wages and some relief from the oppressive Jim Crow regime of the South. Meanwhile, in the Southwest, Mexican migrants found employers seeking their labor even as they faced discrimination and segregation. Women's experience was more unambiguously positive; they not only found jobs in industries where they had previously been disdained, but also triumphed in their century-long struggle to win the right to vote.

Labor Gains at Home Expanded industrial production—and, after May 1917, the draft—created labor shortages, which benefited the organized labor movement. Individually, workers switched jobs and even moved across the country seeking better wages and working conditions. Collectively, they formed new unions and joined established ones. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union doubled in size. The railroad brotherhoods



Agriculture: cash receipts.
Industry: includes mining, electric power, manufacturing, construction, and communications.

FIGURE 6.1 Industrial Wages, 1912–1920
The demands of war production and the shortage of workers resulting from the military draft and enlistments helped workers to win higher wages and increased unionization.

mushroomed. Total union membership increased by nearly 70 percent between 1914 and 1920, to over five million. Close to one of every five nonagricultural workers belonged to a union (Figure 6.1).

But even as the number of jobs expanded and companies with steady, highly profitable orders accepted higher labor costs, labor unrest intensified. Consumer prices rose sharply in 1915 as a result of the war; by 1920, they had doubled. Despite steady employment and higher wages, workers found themselves falling behind as inflation cut their purchasing power. Once the United States entered the war, workers had more complaints: state governments suspended safety, hour, and child labor regulations that had been hard won by progressives and unions, and wartime regulations capped workers' wages but not employers' profits.

As the war went on, strikes and threats of strikes became common. Each year from 1916 through 1920, more than one million workers went on strike—a higher proportion of the workforce than during any similar period before or since. And all kinds of workers struck: union and nonunion, skilled and unskilled, male and female, immigrant and native, day laborer and steady worker. Many war era walkouts were huge, involving workers from different companies and different industries striking in support of one another.

During the six months following the U.S. declaration of war in April 1917, union workers in shipbuilding, coal mining, and the metal trades led a massive wave of strikes, collectively withholding more than six million

workdays. Most hoped to offset higher prices with increased wages; many sought shorter hours or union recognition. Often, strikers made radical demands for control of their work processes, challenging the scientific management and incentive plans employers had implemented in response to government pressure to increase production. Because the thriving economy required full employment, workers gained enhanced power and won many strikes.

Wartime labor militancy forced the federal government to establish labor relations agencies, which built on the progress labor had made during the first Wilson administration. Labor representatives sat on a number of commissions, along with business and government representatives, a system that was pioneered by the National Civic Federation. Never before had unions secured so extensive a role in determining and administering federal labor policy. Wilson appointed progressives who were sympathetic to unionism, such as Frank Walsh, to key positions in agencies such as the War Labor Board.

Industrial Hero
A May 1916 cover of *Collier's* weekly magazine presented a romantic portrait of the industrial worker, reflecting the steel companies' sudden turn to extolling the virtues of their workers in the face of a labor shortage. Herbert Paus, *Collier's*, May 13, 1916 — American Social History Project.

The wartime labor bureaucracy generally accepted the then-novel idea that strikes resulted from real grievances and the denial of collective bargaining rights. Hoping to forestall strikes and reduce job turnover, government officials pressured employers to raise pay, shorten working hours, and improve working conditions. Many believed that a strong union movement would channel workers' discontent into orderly contract negotiations and conflict resolution. As President Wilson declared, in a historic reversal of the antiunionism of the federal government, "Our laws and the long-established policy of our government recognize the right of workingmen to organize unions if they so desire." Wilson's support for labor convinced most union leaders to rally behind the war effort. Not only the labor movement, but also working people themselves, benefited. Steady work and higher pay raised their living standard (Figure 6.2).

FIGURE 6.2 Creating a National Bureaucracy: Growth in Federal Employment, 1881–1920
As this graph shows, the federal government grew during the Progressive era, but the most rapid growth came during World War I.

The Great Migration Even before the United States entered the war, expanding industrial production had dramatically altered patterns of work and residence. Just when mines, factories, and fields needed more workers than ever, the flow of immigrants across the Atlantic dropped sharply because of the war. In 1914, more than one million Europeans had come to America; in 1915, the number fell to less than 200,000, and in 1918, it was only 31,000. That year, the unemployment rate fell to just 2.4 percent, down from over 15 percent just three years earlier. In this context, previously disdained groups—immigrants, African Americans, Appalachian whites, and women—suddenly became desirable employees.

The war also accelerated the movement of Americans from the countryside to the city. The rapidly expanding auto industry, in particular, attracted workers from rural areas in the Midwest, Canada, and the South. Between 1910 and 1920, more than half a million white southerners moved out of their region. The mountainous areas of the Upper South (known as Appalachia) were particularly ripe for an exodus. When the war opened up high-paying jobs in nearby northern cities, an estimated 50,000 West Virginians moved to Akron, Ohio, center of the booming rubber industry.

The "Great Migration" of black southerners offered the most visible example of the shift from country to city. Although African Americans had been moving north in small numbers since the end of Reconstruction, the geographic distribution of the country's black population was much the same in 1910 as it had been half a century earlier. Nine of every ten African Americans lived in the South, chiefly in rural areas. During the next ten years, about 500,000 blacks left the South, most of them after 1916. The

"Such Cases of Outrageous Unspeakable Abuse": A Puerto Rican Migrant Protests Labor Conditions During World War I

Rafael Marchán was one of a group of Puerto Rican workers at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. The high demand for labor spurred the War Department to transport Puerto Rican workers to labor camps in the United States, where they would be housed and fed while working on government contracts at defense plants and military bases. While some U.S. workers experienced gains due to the labor shortage, defense contractors subjected many of the new migrants to harsh conditions and even forced labor. Marchán and others protested to the commissioner of Puerto Rico over the intolerable conditions in the work camp. He gave this deposition in Washington, D.C., in October 1918.

RAFAEL F. MARCHAN, being first duly sworn, deposes and says: That he is a native of Porto Rico, and a citizen of the United States, twenty-seven years old, married, and temporarily residing at Camp Bragg, Fayetteville, North Carolina; that he, and some other 1700 Porto Ricans, were induced and persuaded, . . . to come, and did come, to this country for the purpose of . . . contributing their labor to American industries and works. . . .

The affiant, RAFAEL F. MARCHAN, further deposes and says, that owing to the improper and unsanitary conditions under which the said Porto Ricans labor and live at the said Camp Bragg their health and comfort and even their lives are not only endangered and put in jeopardy but actually broken up and destroyed as it has been the case with some twenty-two of them who have died from utter lack of proper care and medical attention. And the affiant says that at the Hospital the same drinking glass and other utensils are indiscriminately used by all without previous disinfection, with the resulting infection and contagion of such dreaded diseases as influenza, consumption, pneumonia, etc.; and the affiant further says that there have been cases of such utter and inhuman cruelty as to compel sick men under the pretext of their being lazy, to either go to work or be locked up. . . .

And the affiant further deposes and says, that as illustrating the general treatment accorded these Porto Ricans at the Camp, there have been such cases of outrageous unspeakable abuse and degrading ill treatment of the men that some have positively refused to continue at the Camp and announced their intention to leave, but have been prevented to do so by sheer compulsion of force, thus being deprived of their liberty and what is still worse compelled to remain in a state of involuntary servitude; . . . the Fire Chief, who evidently is a regular bully at the Camp has . . . no hesitation in striking men with his fist or brandish his revolver in their faces; and the affiant further says that the acts of cruelty committed daily against these men are too numerous to be cited here in all their repulsive and disgusting details;

(signed) Rafael F. Marchan

Notary Public D.C.

"Rafael Marchan Statement," October 24, 1918, in: Record of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, Record Group 350, File 1493 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives), 123–126.

People We Can Get Along Without

A series of cartoons by Leslie Rogers, published during the 1920s in the African American newspaper *The Chicago Defender*, conveyed everyday tensions between recently arrived southern migrants and longtime residents in the city's black community. Rogers's *Defender* comic strip, *Bungleton Green*, which started in 1920, featured the misadventures of a naïve migrant from the South. Leslie Rogers, *Chicago Defender*, July 9, 1921 — Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

African American population of Chicago nearly doubled, to more than 100,000. New York, with 150,000 black residents, became the largest African American center in the country.

Black Americans had plenty of reasons to leave the rural South: disfranchisement, segregation, poverty, racial violence, lack of educational opportunities, the drudgery of farm life, and just the daily indignities of living under Jim Crow laws. For Joseph Brown, the turning point came when he was ill and asked an Atlanta druggist for a glass of water. Despite a shelf

"Pass Us Away from Here to a Better Land"

This anonymous letter was typical of the letters from southern African Americans that flooded into the office of the Chicago Defender *asking for assistance in coming north. The passes referred to were for free railroad transportation; recruiters looking to hire black workers for jobs in the North sometimes distributed such passes.*

Daphne, Ala. 4/20/17
Sir:

I am writing to let you know that there is 15 or 20 familys wants to come up there at once but can't come on account of money. . . . We can't phone you [because] they don't want us to leave here . . . [but] we want to get away if we can. If you send 20 passes there is no doubt that every one of us will come at once. We are not doing any thing here we can get a living out of. . . . Some of these people are farmers and some are cooks, barbers, and blacksmiths. . . . These are nice people and respectable. . . . We all want to leave here out of this hard luck place that does not need this kind of people.

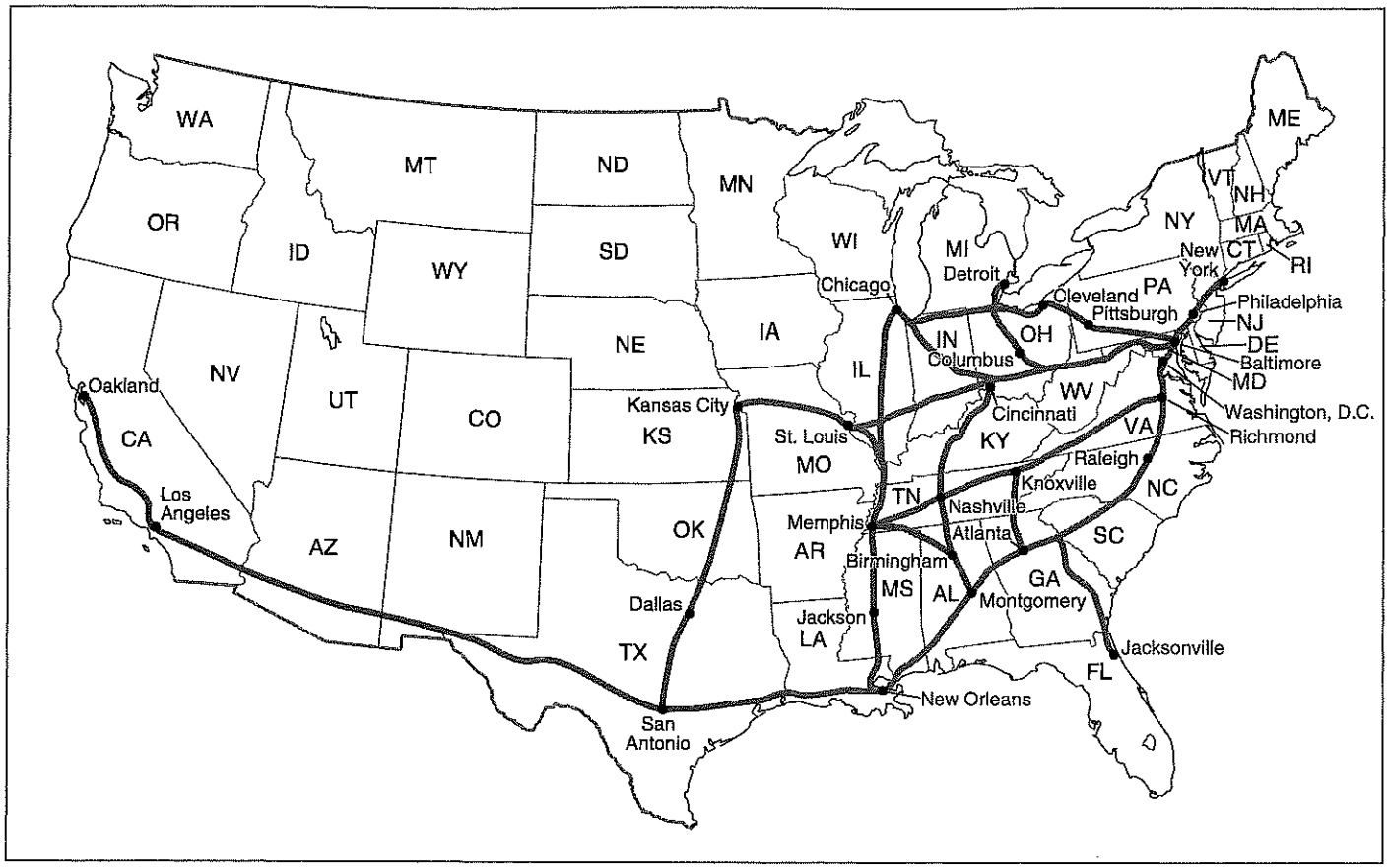
I am a reader of the *Defender* and am delighted to know how times are there & [would be] glad to know if we could get some one to pass us away from here to a better land. . . . Please find someone that need this kind of people and send at once for us. We don't want anything but our wareing and bed clothes and have got no money to get away from here with and begging to get away before we are killed and hope to hear from you at once.

Leslie H. Fishel, Jr., and Benjamin Quarles, eds., *The Black Americans: A Documentary History,* 3rd ed. (1976).

of glasses and a soda fountain, the druggist directed Brown to a bucket of dirty, soapy water out back. "When I left that store and walking back up the hill home, I said, 'God, if you give me strength and give me my health . . . this will never happen to me again.'"

Hard times accelerated the migration of rural black farmers. In 1916, a particularly bad year in the South, the boll weevil attacked the cotton crop, and floods caused extensive damage. Of course, neither the push of southern poverty and racism nor the pull of northern jobs caused most southern blacks to migrate. As late as 1940, three-quarters of all African Americans remained in the South. Leaving, after all, was not always easy. Plantation overseers used violence and threats to prevent an exodus of workers who were crucial to southern agriculture, and state and local governments passed laws designed to put labor recruiters out of business (Map 6.2).

Leaving the South did not mean escaping racism. Kept out of Northern white neighborhoods by law or custom, African Americans migrants crowded into inner-city neighborhoods that became ghettos. Heavy



MAP 6.2 Tracking the Great Migration: Routes Followed by Black Migrants

As this map shows, African American migrants to the North chose their destinations based on their state of origin as well as following family and friends: those from Georgia and the Carolinas headed to cities along the eastern seaboard such as New York and Philadelphia; migrants from Alabama and Mississippi headed for the midwestern cities such as Chicago; and those from Texas, Louisiana, and Tennessee often headed west to California.

industries—steel, meatpacking, autos, shipbuilding, and mining—restricted black men to unskilled jobs, which were often the dirtiest and most physically taxing. Employers generally paid black workers less than white workers, though more than they received in the South. Black women usually worked as domestic servants; in 1920, fewer than 7 percent of them worked in industry.

Despite the residential and occupational segregation, racial tensions developed over real or perceived competition for jobs, housing, and political power. White workers, motivated by a deep-seated racism and fearful that black workers would take their jobs or force down wage levels, staged wildcat strikes against employers who hired black workers. Most unions either barred black workers entirely or segregated them in all-black locals with restricted voting and job rights. Black ministers, politicians, and editors often argued, as had Booker T. Washington, that black workers were more likely to find allies among white employers than among white workers. Though the American Federation of Labor (AFL) used black organizers in its wartime campaign to organize Chicago stockyard workers, only 15 percent of African Americans joined, compared with nearly 90 percent of Poles and Slovaks. One southern black migrant expressed a common view:

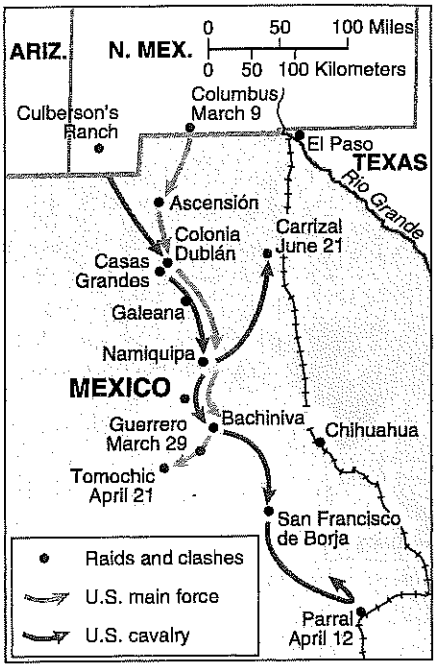
"Unions ain't no good for a colored man. I've seen too much of what they don't do for him."

In spite of all the problems African Americans encountered, many kept coming north. One former southerner wrote back home: "I should have been here twenty years ago. I just begin to feel like a man. . . . My children are going to the same school with the whites and I don't have to humble to no one."

Tension on the Southern Border While African Americans headed north, U.S. relations with countries in Central and South America grew tense. Though Wilson supported nonintervention in Europe, he took a different stance toward the Western Hemisphere, using troops to defend U.S. property in Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. "I am going to teach the South American republics to elect good men!" the president declared. American Marines and naval forces intervened in Haiti in 1915, and the next year began an eight-year military occupation of the Dominican Republic. In these places, Americans appointed financial advisers, supervised elections, and maintained law and order by putting down popular insurrections. The United States also became deeply involved in the Mexican Revolution.

The Mexican Revolution had begun in 1910 with an armed revolt against the thirty-five-year dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz. At first a fight over the presidential succession, the conflict broadened into widespread strife that lasted a decade and cost a million lives. Wilson backed first one Mexican faction and then another, hoping to protect U.S.-owned property, especially oil interests. In 1914, U.S. troops occupied the city of Vera Cruz. Two years later, General Pershing led a U.S. expedition into northern Mexico, after Mexican troops loyal to the agrarian radical Francisco "Pancho" Villa raided a town in New Mexico. There was talk of war, but both countries stepped back. Still, U.S. leaders greeted Mexican self-rule warily, in part because Mexico's new constitution gave the state control of that country's mineral resources and restricted foreign ownership of its oil. Samuel Gompers and the AFL supported Mexican workers in their efforts to modernize the country and set up a national labor federation. The AFL's fear of radical unionism and desire to cooperate with economic expansionist policies helped it to align its efforts with U.S. strategic interests in Mexico (Map 6.3).

To avoid the inflation, violence, and social chaos that accompanied the revolution, many Mexicans fled to the United States. In the years before the war, new railroads had opened up the northern part of Mexico, drawing many individuals from the crowded central provinces to the region near the



MAP 6.3 Chasing Pancho Villa: U.S. Intervention in Mexico, 1916–1917

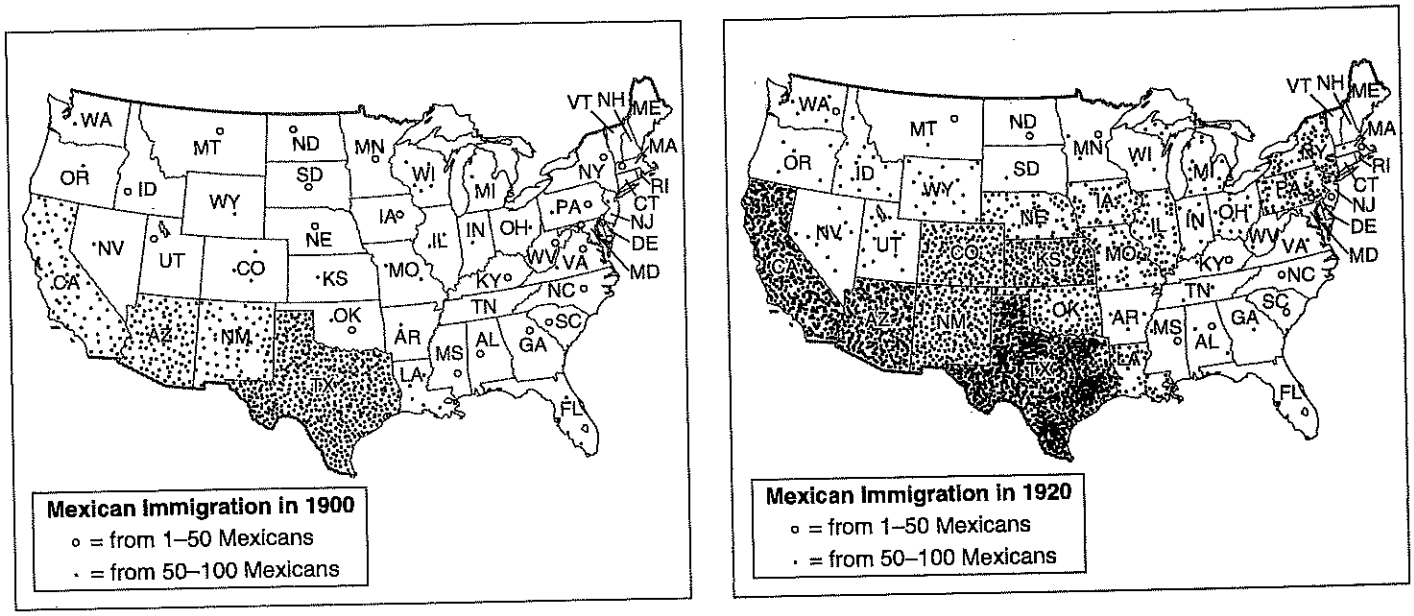
Pancho Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico, to provoke the United States into invading Mexico and thus weaken his opponent, Venustiano Carranza, who was receiving U.S. support. The U.S. Army responded as expected, and U.S. troops spent eleven months unsuccessfully pursuing Villa's army.

U.S. border. Soon, economic opportunities in the rapidly growing American Southwest pulled them across the border. The United States imposed no quota on Mexican immigration, and according to official statistics, more than 185,000 Mexicans entered the United States between 1910 and 1919. Many more crossed the border unofficially. Some estimates indicate that the total number of people of Mexican heritage living in the United States doubled during the decade, to about 750,000 (Map 6.4).

Crossing the border was easy. Officials and border patrols understood that the economy of the American Southwest, not legal restrictions, determined Mexican immigration. They were concerned primarily about Chinese immigrants who might try to enter the country through Mexico. As Charles Armijo, who crossed the border between Juárez and El Paso during the Mexican Revolution, explained, "Well, we just came over. . . . Everybody was allowed to go back and forth whenever they wanted. . . . We came over on the streetcar."

Some Mexicans came temporarily, hoping to save money and return home quickly. Others, intending to stay, settled in established Mexican American communities. However long they planned to stay, most worked in agriculture, especially in Texas, California, Arizona, and Colorado. Railroads and mines also hired large numbers of workers; by 1911, about 60 percent of Arizona's smelter workers were Mexicans. Wages were seven to twenty times those paid in Mexico, though still very low by U.S. standards. As the southwestern labor supply swelled, some Mexican Americans, including many with roots in the region that went back to the 1840s, left for better-paying industrial jobs in the Midwest.

World War I created some new opportunities at military bases around San Antonio, especially in construction, transportation, and maintenance work. After the United States entered World War I, many Mexicans working in the United States feared that they would be drafted. But Mexican labor had become vital to the southwestern economy, and employers pushed the federal government to assure Mexican workers that they would be exempt from the draft. To protect agricultural, mine, and railroad workers, the government also suspended a 1917 immigration law that banned contract labor and imposed a literacy test and a head tax on immigrants. Nevertheless, like African Americans in the South, Mexican Americans encountered discrimination all over the Southwest in segregated schools, theaters, restaurants, and neighborhoods. Often, Mexican workers were paid less than the Anglos who worked beside them. Most unions ignored or excluded Mexicans or relegated them to separate locals.



MAP 6.4 From Mexico to the United States, 1900–1920
These maps, covering the years 1900 and 1920, illustrate the growth of Mexican immigration and the spread of immigrants into the Midwest.

Here, as elsewhere in the United States, discrimination sometimes produced violent reactions. In the lower Rio Grande Valley, Mexicans and Mexican Americans fought the Texas Rangers in hundreds of incidents between 1915 and 1917. Anglo farmers often used violence and intimidation to wrest away Mexicans' land. Displaced ranchers fought back by raiding farms and sabotaging trains and irrigation systems. Twenty-one Anglo Americans were killed in these clashes; in reprisal, Texas officials executed 300 Mexican Americans without trial. The sheriff of Cameron County, Texas, attributed the conflict to the "unwillingness of American newcomers to the valley to accept the Mexican" and claimed that the Rangers often shouted, "We have to make this a white man's country!!" In the end, the Mexican ranchers were reduced to being wage laborers.

The Mexican American community contained many radicals, including members of the Socialist Party and the IWW. In New Mexico and Arizona in 1917, the Western Federation of Miners and the United Mine Workers of America brought Anglo and Mexican miners together to cooperate in a series of mine strikes. But their struggle to eliminate unequal wages and win union recognition ended when officials arrested and then deported thousands of Mexican-born strikers.

Other Mexican immigrants avoided political activity, concentrating instead on saving money to buy land or businesses back home. But like many Slavs and Italians before them, many Mexican immigrants gave up plans to return home and settled permanently in the United States. Over time, the long-established Spanish-speaking communities of the West and Southwest became increasingly important in this, the fastest-growing region of the country. Unlike European immigrants, however, Mexican Americans

Invading Forces
A 1914 Mexican postcard shows a company of U.S. soldiers marching along the Avenida Independencia in Vera Cruz. Postcards were a popular medium for disseminating photographic images of the war on both sides of the Mexican-U.S. border. Photography Collection, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

lived not across an ocean from their homeland, but across a nearby border. Many went back and forth to work or to stay with family. In individual lives and in the character of the border towns, two cultures coexisted.

Women Workers and Woman Suffrage Like Mexicans, women workers found new opportunities in the wartime economy. For the first time, employers offered them traditionally male jobs—for example, as railroad workers and streetcar conductors. Others found metalworking and munitions jobs, often as part of a management decision to hire less-skilled workers. Most of these women moved up from lower-paying jobs they had held before the war in female-dominated occupations, although some had never worked for pay. But the gains women made in traditional blue-collar work proved temporary; once the war ended, most women left or were forced out of their jobs.

The war did, however, hasten the expansion of one area of work that had been open to women since the 1890s: clerical jobs. Women worked in government bureaucracies, which expanded with the U.S. entry into the war. Even more women worked for the growing corporations, which found that achieving and then maintaining horizontal and vertical integration of production and resources demanded considerable paperwork. By 1920, there were nearly eight times as many women clerical workers as there had been in 1900. Despite the loss of blue-collar jobs at the end of the war, there were still 700,000 more women in the labor force in 1920 than in 1910.

"Iron Road"

Many songs composed by Mexican immigrants expressed homesickness, disappointment, and concern over the adoption of "American" values. In the following song, the completion of a railroad line stretching over 600 miles from Victoria, Texas, to central Mexico is portrayed as an occasion for alarm rather than celebration.

El Ferrocarril

La máquina pasajera
No puede hacer cosa buena
Porque "oscurece" en su casa
Y amanece en tierra ajena.

¡Ay! ¡qué dolor!
Tendrían los mexicanos
Al ver el ferrocarril
Que traen los americanos.
La máquina chiquitita
Es la que ha quedado aquí
Y la quieren llegar
Hasta San Luis Potosí.
Oigan y oigan
El ferrocarril bramar
Él que lleva a los hombres
Y nunca los vuelve a traer.

Iron Road

She's like a bird of passage
Who never can do the right thing.
She leaves her home every evening
Just to see what the morning might bring.
Oh, what a pain
Will visit those Mexicans
When they hear her steaming down the track, The train of the Americans.
Just a little bitty steam engine
Is all they left for me
And they really think it'll go from here
To San Luis Potosí.
Listen, listen,
Hear her roar down the track
She's coming for a load of men
That she won't be bringing back.

Manuel Gamio, *Mexican Immigration to the United States* (1930). Reprinted with permission of Dover Publications.

The war also opened up some new opportunities for black women, the least advantaged group in the workforce. Even in Southern cities such as Atlanta, some factories hired black women; between 1910 and 1920, the percentage of black women in domestic service dropped from 84 to 75 percent. Worried employers used legal and illegal coercion to reverse this trend. They took advantage of "Work or Fight" laws, which were ostensibly intended to force unemployed men into military service, to prosecute black women who declined jobs as household workers. A vigilante group in Vicksburg, Mississippi, harassed "idle" black workers, a group that included women who did not want to work as domestics. They tarred and feathered Ethel Barrett while her husband was away fighting in France.

On other fronts, some women war workers were better situated to demand social and political rights and advance the movement for woman suffrage. In New York City, working-class suffragists saw a close link between the vote and the conditions on the job. "Why are you paid less than a man?" asked a leaflet put out by the Wage-Earners' Suffrage League there. "Why are your hours so long?" The answer: "Because you are a woman and have no vote. Votes make the law. . . . The law controls conditions."

Arms and the Woman
Recently hired women operate equipment in a Bloomfield, New Jersey, munitions plant in 1917. Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

The war years saw new divisions within the suffrage movement, particularly over tactical questions. A new militant suffrage group, the National Woman's Party (NWP), formed in 1916. Led by Alice Paul, a social worker who had studied in England, the NWP was founded on the tactics of British suffragists, who held the party in power responsible for the denial of the vote to women. To publicize their grievance, the antiwar NWP began picketing the White House to demand voting rights. Arrested, the imprisoned pickets went on a hunger strike and were brutally force-fed. Meanwhile, more conservative women's groups energetically supported the war by knitting socks, selling war bonds, and preparing Red Cross supplies. They cemented an alliance with Wilson and united local and state suffrage groups in a centrally directed effort.

In different ways, both groups tried to use Wilson's democratic rhetoric to their own advantage. As one historian points out, "Wilson's 'safe for democracy' speech was analogous to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which did not free any slaves but probably made freeing them inevitable." By asking Americans to fight for "democracy versus autocracy," Wilson put compelling logic behind the drive for universal suffrage.

The combination of the NWP's militant agitation and NAWSA's pragmatic political alliances worked. By 1914, women had acquired the right to vote in the territory of Alaska and in eleven states, all of which, except Illinois, were west of the Mississippi. NAWSA spent the next three years conducting vigorous campaigns throughout the East, while the NWP kept up the pressure in Washington. Three years later, women had won at least

"We Don't Want Other Women Ever to Have to Do This Over Again"

Polish-born suffragist Rose Winslow (her given name was Ruza Wenclawska) started working in a Pennsylvania textile mill at age eleven, quitting eight years later when she developed tuberculosis. In 1917, she was one of five protesters who were sentenced to seven months in prison for obstructing traffic in front of the White House. After she and National Woman's Party founder Alice Paul began a hunger strike, they were transferred to a prison hospital. Winslow smuggled out an account she kept of her stay.

If this thing is necessary we will naturally go through with it. Force is so stupid a weapon. I feel so happy doing my bit for decency—for our war, which is after all, real and fundamental.

The women are all so magnificent, so beautiful. Alice Paul is as thin as ever, pale and large-eyed. We have been in solitary for five weeks. There is nothing to tell but that the days go by somehow. I have felt quite feeble the last few days—faint, so that I could hardly get my hair brushed, my arms ached so. But to-day I am well again. Alice Paul and I talk back and forth though we are at opposite ends of the building and a hall door also shuts us apart. But occasionally—thrills—we escape from behind our iron-barred doors and visit. Great laughter and rejoicing!

My fainting probably means nothing except that I am not strong after these weeks. I know you won't be alarmed. . . .

Alice Paul is in the psychopathetic ward. She dreaded forcible feeding frightfully, and I hate to think how she must be feeling. I had a nervous time of it, gasping a long time afterward, and my stomach rejecting during the process. I spent a bad, restless night, but otherwise I am all right. The poor soul who fed me got liberally besprinkled during the process. I heard myself making the most hideous sounds. . . . One feels so forsaken when one lies prone and people shove a pipe down one's stomach.

This morning but for an astounding tiredness, I am all right. I am waiting to see what happens when the President realizes that brutal bullying isn't quite a statesmanlike method for settling a demand for justice at home. At least, if men are supine enough to endure, women—to their eternal glory— are not. . . .

. . . Don't let them tell you we take this well. Miss Paul vomits much. I do, too. . . . We think of the coming feeding all day. It is horrible. The doctor thinks I take it well. I hate the thought of Alice Paul and the others if I take it well. . . .

All the officers here know we are making this hunger strike that women fighting for liberty may be considered political prisoners; we have told them. God knows we don't want other women ever to have to do this over again.

Doris Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom* (1920).

Hands Across the Water
Demonstrators in front of the White House in July 1917 appealed to representatives of the new Russian government to support American woman suffrage as a condition for Russia's remaining in the Allied camp. The banner roused the ire of patriotic passersby, and soon after this photograph was taken, an angry crowd attacked the suffragists. Harris and Ewing, 1917 — National Archives.

partial voting rights in eight additional states, including New York, long a major battleground, and Arkansas, the first southern state to grant suffrage.

In January 1918, the House of Representatives passed a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote. Despite Wilson's endorsement of the measure as "vital to the winning of the war," antisuffrage Republicans and southern Democratic senators blocked the amendment. In response, the NWP and NAWSA mobilized a massive outpouring of marches, parades, and meetings to overcome lingering opposition in the Senate and state legislatures, three-quarters of which had to ratify the amendment. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the crucial thirty-sixth state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment, after a twenty-four-year-old legislator changed his vote at his mother's insistence. The Nineteenth Amendment went into effect in time for that year's presidential election. Among the first voters was ninety-one-year-old Charlotte Woodward, who as a teenager had witnessed the start of the women's rights movement at Seneca Falls seventy-two years earlier.

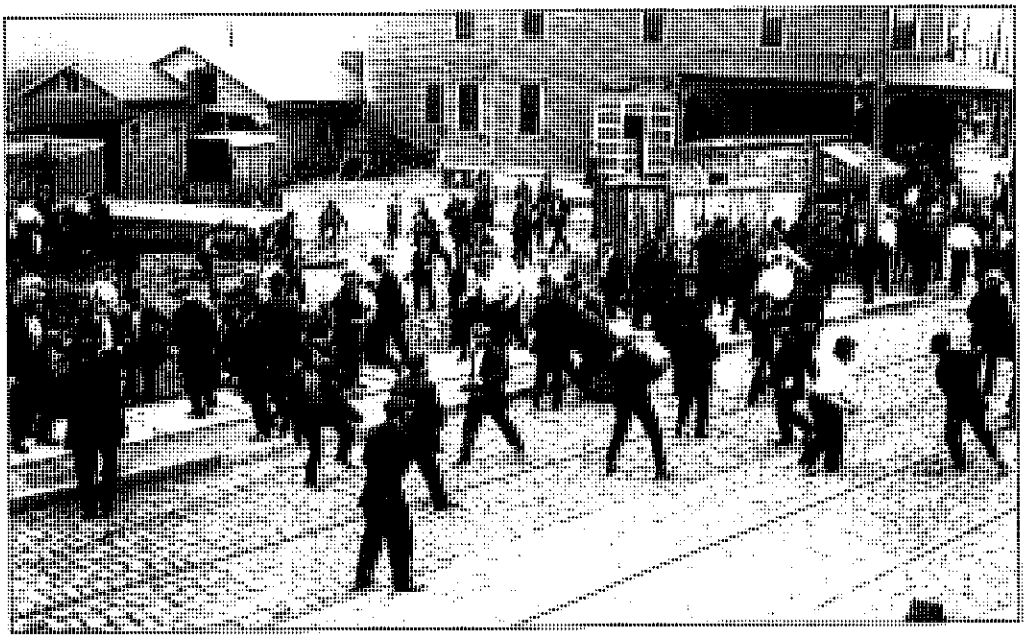
Militancy, Repression, and Nativism

The same radical wartime spirit that infected the most militant suffragists infused some working-class struggles as well, especially those led by the IWW. But radical protesters quickly faced repression, as federal agents (armed with the repressive Espionage and Sedition acts) and local police arrested thousands of Wobblies and critics of the war. Immigrants—especially German Americans—also encountered attacks and suspicions about their loyalty. In the nativist atmosphere, prohibitionists won the banning of

alcoholic beverages, in part by associating liquor consumption with immigrants, especially the beer-drinking Germans.

Working-Class Protest and Political Radicalism In some cases, the new wartime radicalism had foreign sources. Many Europeans who came to America in the decade before World War I had supported socialism, anarchism, and trade unionism in their native lands. As their influence spread through immigrant communities, workers grew increasingly receptive to collective action and political radicalism. The sense of radical possibility—that society could be fundamentally transformed—grew in November 1917, when V. I. Lenin and his Bolshevik Party led a successful Communist revolution in Russia. Other leaders, such as Eugene Debs, drew their radicalism from American sources and insisted that the United States live up to the democratic promises Wilson and others trumpeted.

The new militancy often came from people who had previously seemed indifferent to radicalism and collective action. Among them were many unskilled immigrant workers who had planned to return to their native lands but now were stranded by the wartime disruption of transatlantic travel. Miserable job conditions that had once been seen as temporary became intolerable when viewed as permanent. In Bayonne, New Jersey, Polish refinery workers had long accepted low pay, long hours, and dangerous working conditions. But when they walked off the job in 1915, virtually the entire Polish community supported them. Only police violence and hired thugs broke the strike; five strikers were killed by gunfire. Visiting Bayonne, wrote journalist Mary Heaton Vorse, "you realize that you are in a terrorized city, and that fear is in the very air that you breathe." Still, refinery workers struck again the next year.



Just Before the Firing Started
Moments after these striking workers were photographed confronting guards outside the Bayonne, New Jersey, Standard Oil Works, the private police opened fire, killing five strikers. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

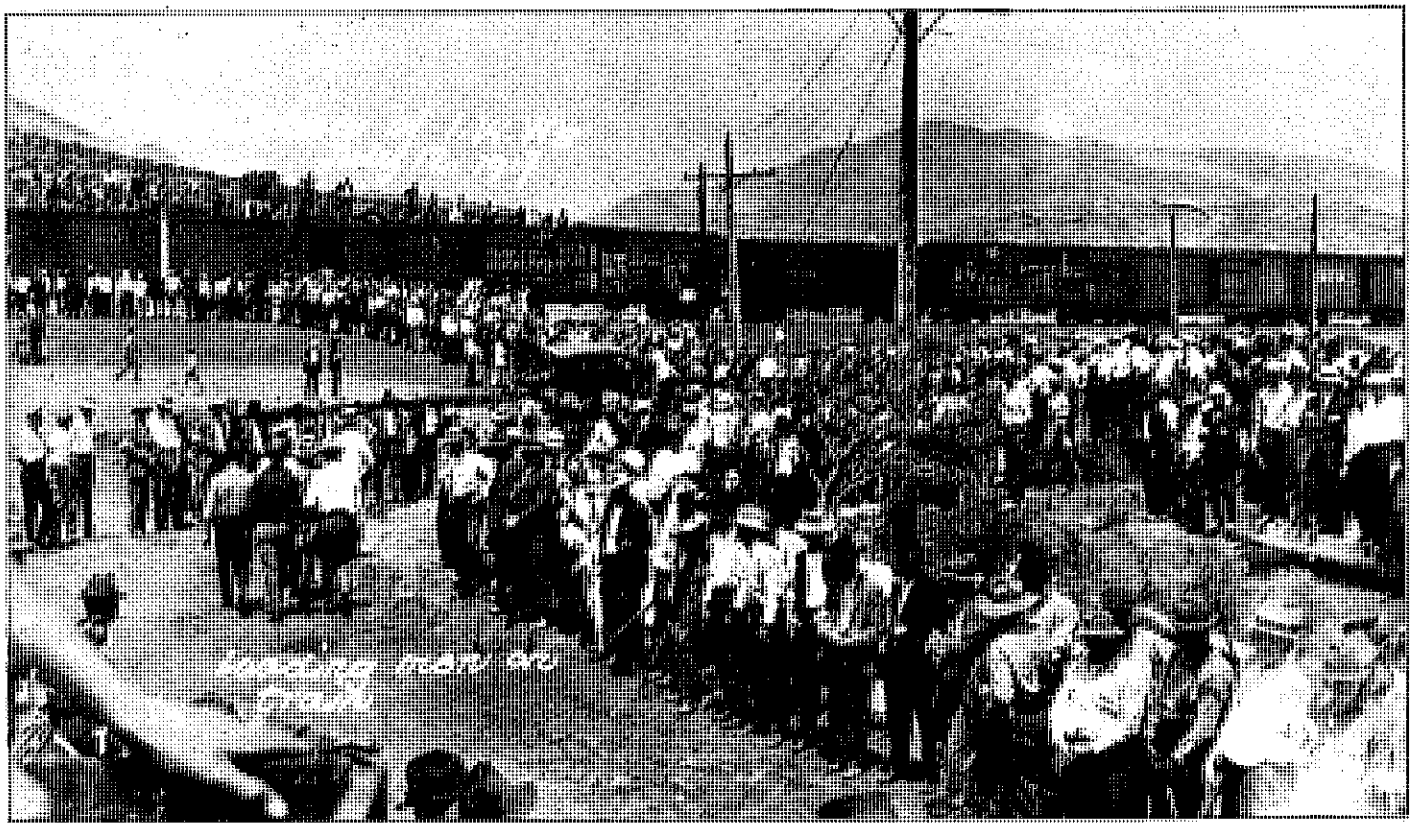
Food Riot, 1917
Wartime inflation severely taxed the limited budgets of working-class families. After confronting pushcart peddlers who were charging exorbitant rates for necessities, thousands of women marched to New York's City Hall on February 20, 1917, to demand relief. The "food riot" precipitated a boycott campaign that eventually forced pushcart prices down.
National Archives.

Housewives as well as workers took to the streets, protesting high food prices. Wartime inflation had pushed food prices to astonishing levels — for instance, potatoes more than doubled in price during one month in 1916 — and wages, though increasing, could not keep up. In early 1917, a desperate Brooklyn woman overturned a peddler's pushcart. Running after her, the vendor was attacked by hundreds of other women; eventually a thousand rioters battled police. One officer, who refused to arrest rioting women in another Brooklyn neighborhood the next day, explained, "I just didn't have the heart to do it. They were just crazy with hunger, and I don't see how I could blame them."

In this atmosphere of militancy, the IWW found new life. The organization had been in decline when the war started, but during the war years, it shifted its focus from eastern factory towns such as Lawrence, Massachusetts, and Paterson, New Jersey, to the West and the Midwest. There, the Wobblies recruited migratory workers: semiskilled and unskilled farm workers, lumberjacks, railroad men, and miners who moved from job to job, often weathering long bouts of unemployment. Most were single; many were immigrants. The IWW attracted them because they were alienated — literally rootless and terribly exploited, both on the job and in the miserable barracks that employers provided to house them. The IWW organizers understood their needs and offered social networks as well as union leadership.

In 1916, the Wobblies led a strike of 10,000 miners in the Mesabi iron range of northern Minnesota, and they then began an intensive campaign to organize northwestern lumber workers. Around the same time, the IWW signed up thousands of midwestern harvest workers and won better pay and working conditions from wheat farmers who were more eager to take advantage of high grain prices than of cheap labor.

In response to these successes, government at all levels attacked the radical Wobblies, trying to stigmatize them as illegitimate. Police (and hired thugs) beat and shot strikers and repeatedly arrested IWW organizers. In



The Bisbee Deportation, July 12, 1917
All over the country, Wobblies faced coordinated government-employer attacks. In Bisbee, Arizona, a local sheriff, with the aid of the Phelps-Dodge mining company, deputized townspeople to break up an IWW-led strike. Vigilantes arrested 1,200 alleged Wobblies, aliens, and subversives and, as shown in this photograph, loaded them into cattle cars. The cars were towed to the middle of the New Mexico desert and abandoned. Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

Everett, Washington, in 1916, sheriff's deputies removed 40 Wobbly prisoners from jail, took them to a wooded park, stripped them, and made them run a gauntlet of vigilantes, who beat the naked prisoners with guns and whips. The next year, federal agents raided every IWW office in the country and put 2,000 Wobblies in jail, including the entire executive board. Courts convicted most of violating wartime statutes and sentenced them to long jail terms. The IWW would never recover.

Repression and Nativism The attack on the IWW was only one part of a government effort to end protest and silence dissent. Officials engaged in extensive press censorship. In the summer of 1917, the Post Office Department refused second-class mailing privileges to newspapers and magazines that were critical of the war, the draft, or even the way the war was being conducted. It banned socialist periodicals, which had a combined prewar circulation exceeding half a million, from the mails. The foreign-language press was closely watched; a federal law required that articles discussing the war or the government be submitted in translation for prior approval—a process that was so costly that many papers folded and others adopted a progovernment stance in hopes of winning exemption from the rule.

Critics of the war were also silenced through arrest. The government put 1,500 people on trial for opposing the war or counseling draft resistance. And federal officials detained more than 6,000 German and Austrian

The I.W.W. and the Other Features That Go With It

By using the acronym "I.W.W." in place of the features of Kaiser Wilhelm, this 1917 *New York Globe* cartoon accused the Wobblies of treason. Harold Tucker Webster, *Cartoon Magazine*, September 1917 — Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

nationals as potential threats to national security. The Wilson administration worried particularly about antiwar sentiment among workers. To counteract the widespread belief that the United States was fighting a businessmen's war, the Department of Labor and the Committee on Public Information deluged factories with posters, slogans, and speakers.

Government repression bred a vigilante spirit. Members of "loyalty" organizations harassed and beat radical opponents of the war and even those who simply refused to buy Liberty Bonds. They also spied on neighbors and coworkers; in the name of patriotism, reactionaries and businessmen used their reports of these organizations to harass radicals and unionists. The Department of Justice granted funding and quasi-official status to the largest loyalty organization, the American Protective League.

Immigrants had a particularly hard time. Even before the United States had joined the conflict, Allied sympathizers questioned the loyalties of "hyphenated" Americans (German Americans, Polish Americans, and so forth). They depicted immigrants as potentially more loyal to their countries of birth than to their adopted land. In fact, the opposite was often true: the experience of war led many immigrants to identify closely with the United States. Tens of thousands of them entered the armed forces, fought in the war, and embraced the rhetoric of democracy and self-determination that Wilson trumpeted.

Even so, fears of divided loyalties lingered. Wilson spoke of the need for "100 percent Americanism," while Theodore Roosevelt called for "America for Americans." Suspicion and hostility focused particularly on German Americans. Mobs attacked German American stores and drove German American performers off the stage. German Americans were harassed, beaten, tarred and feathered, forced to kiss the flag, and, in at least one instance, lynched.

Amid this hysteria, Congress passed several nativist measures. In 1917, a law that was enacted over Wilson's veto imposed a literacy test and other

restrictions on immigration. The same year, Congress passed the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which banned the manufacture or sale of alcoholic beverages; it was ratified in 1919. Though temperance supporters had long advocated Prohibition on moral grounds or as a means of increasing productivity, nativism was involved, too. Many people associated alcohol with immigrants, specifically German Americans, who dominated the brewing industry.

"This Is for Traitors"
The pillory, a device that was used in colonial New England to punish through public ridicule, was resurrected in Cincinnati in 1918. Placed in a public square, this pillory was "a warning to citizens of Cincinnati as to what they may expect in case of disloyalty." Unable to find a convenient dissenter immediately, the photographer of this picture had to make do with an acquiescent volunteer. J. R. Schmidt, 1918 — National Archives.

Like many other aspects of the wartime loyalty campaign, Prohibition had little to do with the direct requirements of fighting a war. Rather, the international crisis seemed to validate nativist fears, legitimizing the use of government power to enforce social, political, and cultural orthodoxy. But Prohibition was also a "progressive" measure in its embrace of an activist government, its moralistic impulses, and its promise of a more orderly society and culture. Although many wartime measures were only temporary, the campaign for enforced consensus also had permanent effects: radical groups were severely weakened, and in the next decade, immigration was nearly cut off. The atmosphere of fear and intolerance would persist in the postwar era.

Winning the War and Losing the Peace

Although American troops entered the war late and suffered only a tiny fraction of the war's casualties, they played a crucial role in the Allied victory in November 1918. Nevertheless, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson could not shape the peace according to the principles of self-determination that he had advocated. Moreover, many Americans, suspicious of foreign entanglements, rejected Wilson's internationalist vision embodied in the League of Nations, and the U.S. Congress refused to ratify the Versailles treaty.

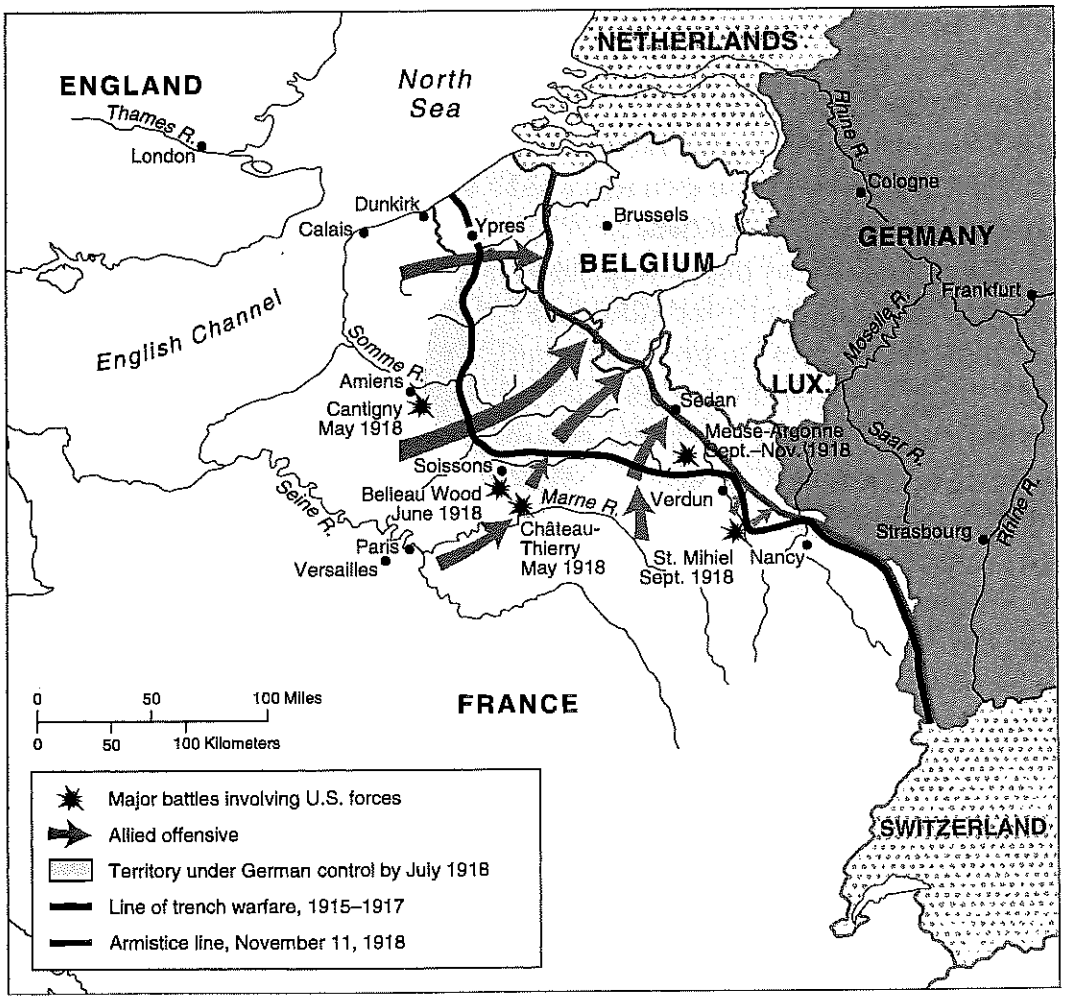
Workers, African Americans, and radicals also, in effect, lost the peace. Most of the immense strikes that shook the nation in 1919 resulted in labor defeats. African Americans found themselves the objects of antiblack riots. And radicals suffered arrest and deportation in a "Red scare" that featured massive violations of civil liberties. Some wartime gains—woman suffrage, for example—persisted into the 1920s, but the soaring promise of a "war to make the world safe for democracy" remained unfulfilled.

American Troops and the Battles They Fought When the United States declared war in 1917, the Allies had hoped that U.S. troops would quickly be integrated into the French and British combat units that were already fighting in Europe. Instead, Wilson accepted his military staff's recommendation to organized separate American units under U.S. command. To this end, Congress authorized the draft in May 1917. The U.S. Army—about 122,000 strong when war was declared—would grow to 3,623,000 by the time the war ended (Map 6.5).

Proponents of conscription had argued that a draft would strengthen American democracy by bringing young men from different ethnic and class backgrounds into close, cooperative relationships. The reality was

MAP 6.5 Not So Quiet on the Western Front: America in World War I

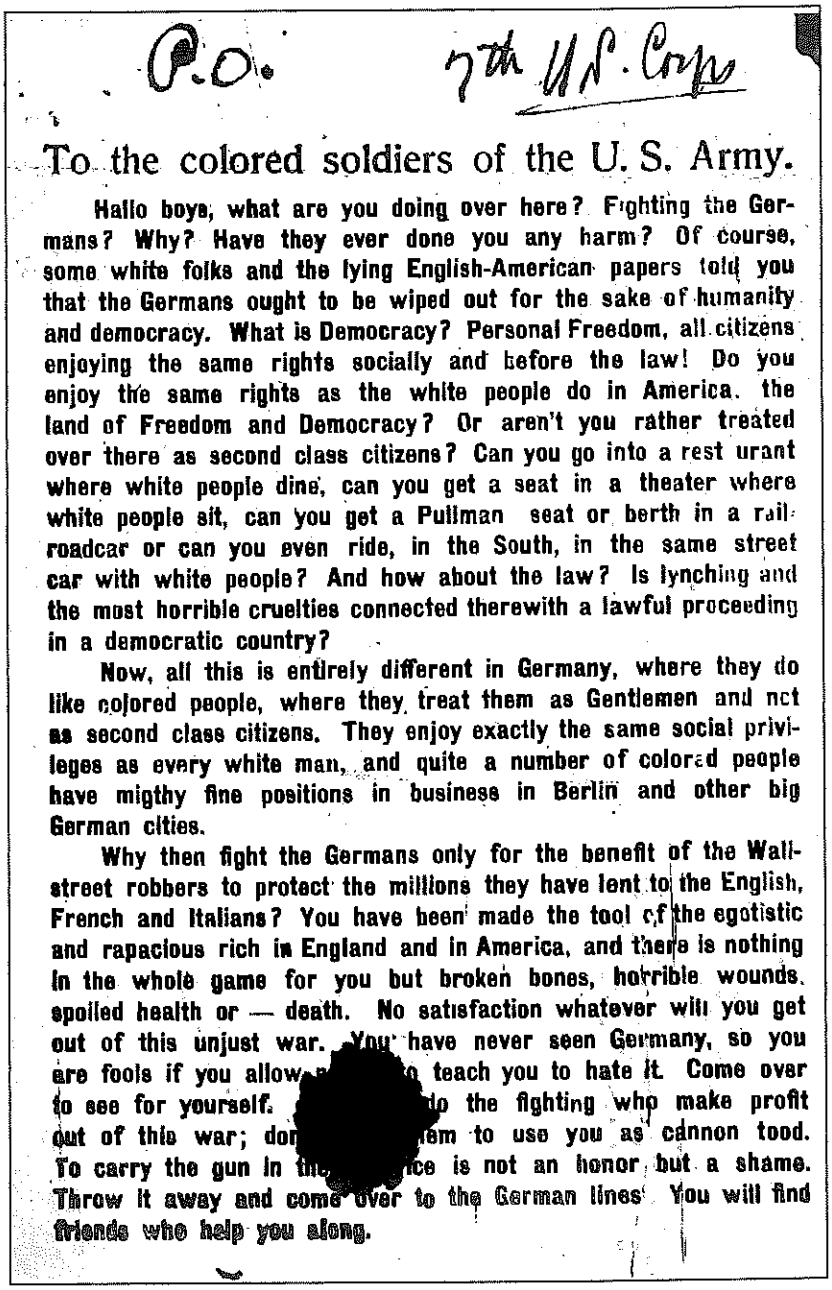
U.S. troops, commanded by General John J. Pershing, finally arrived on the Western Front in the summer of 1918. They played a crucial role in pushing back the exhausted German troops in battles at Saint-Mihiel, Belleau Wood, Château-Thierry, and especially Meuse-Argonne. Large numbers of American troops saw battle, but the United States suffered many fewer casualties than did the other combatants.



sometimes different. The draft law exempted immigrants who had not filed naturalization papers. And military officials put some foreign-born draftees into ethnically segregated "development battalions," where they were taught English and civics. The army at first declined to take black draftees but eventually established separate units for them. The marines remained exclusively white, and the navy employed African Americans only as cooks and kitchen help.

In the fall of 1917, African Americans began to be drafted in large numbers; eventually nearly 370,000 were inducted. But segregated units and racist harassment (including demeaning insults from white officers) continually reminded them of their second-class citizenship. Under pressure from African Americans, the army put more than half the black soldiers into combat units rather than support groups. But these men remained segregated from white soldiers.

Standardized testing, administered as part of the induction procedure, lent a pseudoscientific gloss to prejudices that lay behind the segregation of troops. The military gave nearly two million soldiers a newly developed "IQ" test, which purported to measure innate intelligence. The psychologists in charge maintained that the tests "proved" that Northern and Western Europeans were more intelligent than Southern and Eastern Europeans, who in turn were thought to be more intelligent than African Americans. In reality, the IQ tests were flawed in both design and administration, and the results were virtually meaningless. The tests actually measured literacy in English and familiarity with mainstream American culture, not intelligence. A typical question read: "Christy Mathewson is famous as a: writer, artist, baseball player, comedian." (Many recent immigrants did not know that the correct answer was "baseball player.") Nonetheless, the army's program legitimized IQ testing, and nativists would use it in the 1920s to justify quotas limiting immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.



P.O. 7th U.S. Corps

To the colored soldiers of the U. S. Army.

Hallo boys, what are you doing over here? Fighting the Germans? Why? Have they ever done you any harm? Of course, some white folks and the lying English-American papers told you that the Germans ought to be wiped out for the sake of humanity and democracy. What is Democracy? Personal Freedom, all citizens enjoying the same rights socially and before the law! Do you enjoy the same rights as the white people do in America, the land of Freedom and Democracy? Or aren't you rather treated over there as second class citizens? Can you go into a rest urant where white people dine, can you get a seat in a theater where white people sit, can you get a Pullman seat or berth in a railroadcar or can you even ride, in the South, in the same street car with white people? And how about the law? Is lynching and the most horrible cruelties connected therewith a lawful proceeding in a democratic country?

Now, all this is entirely different in Germany, where they do like colored people, where they treat them as Gentlemen and not as second class citizens. They enjoy exactly the same social privileges as every white man, and quite a number of colored people have mighty fine positions in business in Berlin and other big German cities.

Why then fight the Germans only for the benefit of the Wallstreet robbers to protect the millions they have lent to the English, French and Italians? You have been made the tool of the egotistic and rapacious rich in England and in America, and there is nothing in the whole game for you but broken bones, horrible wounds, spoiled health or — death. No satisfaction whatever will you get out of this unjust war. You have never seen Germany, so you are fools if you allow [redacted] to teach you to hate it. Come over to see for yourself. [redacted] do the fighting who make profit out of this war; don[redacted]em to use you as cannon food. To carry the gun in the [redacted]ice is not an honor but a shame. Throw it away and come over to the German lines. You will find friends who help you along.

"To the Colored Soldiers of the U.S. Army"

This propaganda leaflet was dropped by German airplanes behind American lines. By stressing racist conditions in the United States, the leaflets attempted to destroy morale and encourage desertion among African American troops. National Archives.

"You Boys Give 'Em Hell for Me"

The following diary entries by Elmer Sherwood, a corporal from Linton, Indiana, reveal that even a brief experience with front-line combat could be harrowing. Sherwood described fighting on the Western Front near the end of the war.

Oct. 8. . . . Two of our fellows had already been wounded by an explosion near our kitchen this morning, but I was determined to go back for some mess because I was so confounded hungry. . . . I had just got a panful of slum and started eating, when I saw part of the temporary trench I had left, screened by an exploding shell. I thought it had come over the trench, but no—just then Smithy and Netterfield jumped out calling for stretchers.

I dropped my mess and ran to the trench and looked in. Poor Art was dead, one arm completely severed from his body. Danny had a hole in his stomach and we placed him on a stretcher and sent him back to the first aid station. . . . Dan looked at me with a smile on his face as we loaded him into an ambulance. I gave him a word of cheer and he said, "I don't know, Doc, old boy. I've got a pretty bad wound in my stomach. You boys give 'em hell for me." [He died the same day.]

I have seen many die, but none have been so close to me as these fellows. I have worked with them and fought beside them every day since I joined the outfit, and they have been my best pals.

But we must carry on, whatever happens. I ran back to the trench and rescued the battered switch board. . . . We are experiencing a fierce cannonading as I jot down these lines.

Oct. 30. Last night Fritz [the Germans] put on a whale of a bombardment, and I don't see how any of us escaped to tell the story. In the thick of it our communications were knocked out and I was detailed to repair the telephone line. How kind they are to me! Well, I thought of all the mean things I had done in my life, breathed a little prayer.

Flashes of exploding artillery at intervals lighted up the blackness of the night. Explosions of enemy shells on every hand and the scream of big ones going over head to back areas added to the thunderous roar so that I could not have heard my own voice had I dared to speak. Boy! I was glad when I came to that break in the line. I was splicing the wire when—Shriek! Bang! a ton of steel came over me. Just as I finished the job—hell's bells—another hit knocked the line out of place.

For once I lost my cocky self-assurance, for I wasn't so certain that I would ever see home and Mother again. But finally, after stumbling over the body of a dead German, I came upon the next break and spliced it in a hurry. Then I raced back to my hole after reporting communications in order.

William Matthews and Dixon Wecter, *Our Soldiers Speak, 1775–1918* (1943).

Segregated or not, the American troops and the supplies that accompanied them proved crucial to the Allied victory, in part because it undercut German resolve to continue the war. General John Joseph Pershing commanded the American Expeditionary Forces. Between May and September 1918, a million American troops arrived in France; another million came in the next two months. They reinforced French positions in June 1918, and large numbers joined the combat by mid-September.

At the end of September, Pershing launched a drive through France's Argonne forest, pushing the Germans back. German troops, exhausted by an offensive the previous spring and undercut by revolution in Berlin, began to mutiny. One by one, Germany's allies surrendered—Bulgaria in September, Turkey in October, and Austria-Hungary on November 3. Eight days later, the Germans signed an armistice. Argonne was America's major contribution to the war. Though many American soldiers saw battle, few experienced the prolonged trench warfare that ended the lives of 1.8 million Germans, 1.7 million Russians, 1.4 million French, 1.2 million Austro-Hungarians, and over 900,000 British. In contrast, only 112,000 American soldiers and sailors died, over half of them from disease.

At the end of the war, Europe was devastated. Governments had collapsed, and widespread famine had decimated whole populations. In 1918, a worldwide influenza epidemic killed between twenty million and forty million people, as one-fifth of the world's population contracted the virus. A century of optimism and "progress" had been reversed by four years of war.

Wilson and the Shape of the Peace In promoting the war as a crusade that would make the world "safe for democracy," Wilson argued that all the Allies—including Russia, which had overthrown its tsar in the 1917 revolution—were democracies, battling an autocratic German Kaiser and an

New Faces
This display of plaster casts showed soldiers' mutilated faces (top row) and their reconstructions with the aid of new prosthetic devices (bottom row). In spite of its original purpose, the display now serves as a reminder of the damage inflicted on those who fought in World War I and the imperfect attempts to contend with those gruesome effects. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

"Please, Let Me Put Him in a Macaroni Box"

Louise Abruchezze, an Italian immigrant, survived the 1918 and 1919 Spanish influenza epidemic that killed more humans than any other disease in a similar period in the history of the world. In the United States, at least twenty-five million people contracted the flu, and approximately 675,000 died. In this excerpt from an oral history by Charlie Hardy, Abruchezze shares her experience in Philadelphia.

We were the only family saved from the influenza. The rest of the neighbors all were sick. Now I remember so well, very well, directly across the street from us, a boy about 7, 8 years old died and they used to just pick you up and wrap you up in a sheet and put you in a patrol wagon. So the mother and father screaming. "Let me get a macaroni box." Before, macaroni, any kind of pasta used to come in these wooden boxes about this long and that high, that 20 lbs. of macaroni fitted in the box. "Please, please, let me put him in the macaroni box. Let me put him in the box. Don't take him away like that." And that was it. My mother had given birth to my youngest sister at the time and then, thank God, you know, we survived. But they were taking people out left and right. And the undertaker would pile them up and put them in the patrol wagons and take them away.

Interview done by Charles Hardy for WHYY-FM radio program *The Influenza Pandemic of 1918*, Philadelphia, 1984.

Austro-Hungarian emperor. Casting the conflict in this light helped Wilson to win popular support for the war.

But the second phase of the Russian Revolution, which began in November 1917, created a profound crisis for Wilson and the Allies. When Lenin's Bolshevik Party seized control of Russia, it quickly initiated peace talks with Germany and urged European workers and soldiers to stop the war. Lenin also published secret treaties in which Allied governments had agreed to carve up the territory and colonies of the Central Powers at the war's end. This revelation undercut Wilson's claims of a war for democracy. Finally, the Bolsheviks promised a far-reaching social transformation that appealed to downtrodden peoples around the world. For some, the revolutionary Lenin, not the reformist Wilson, seemed the towering figure of the age.

In March 1918, Lenin's new government signed a separate treaty with Germany and withdrew from the war. Within months, the United States, England, and France sent troops to Russia in an ill-fated effort to weaken Bolshevik forces and maintain military pressure on Germany's Eastern Front. Even before the war ended, Wilson seemed to repudiate his principle of national self-determination.

Nonetheless, that principle that each nation had the right to choose its own government became central to Wilson's famous Fourteen Points, which

he first proposed in a speech to Congress in 1918. The Fourteen Points called for free trade, freedom of the seas, arms reduction, arbitration of international disputes, and the adjustment of European borders along ethnic lines—all to be achieved through open negotiation of public treaties. To maintain peace, Wilson proposed that a League of Nations be formed to guarantee its members' "political independence and territorial integrity." Although the Allies never formally endorsed the Fourteen Points, they were the main platform on which the war was sold, in both the United States and Europe, during the last year of the war.

Society Note from Moscow
This cartoon, one of a series by Alfred Frueh in the radical weekly *Good Morning*, celebrated the Bolshevik Revolution's impact on Russia's aristocracy: "Count Parasitsky will not occupy his palatial residence in the mountains this summer," reads the caption. "He expects to remain in the city and do uplift work." Alfred Frueh, *Good Morning*, May 15, 1919 — Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Wilson was a popular hero, and when he arrived in Europe late in 1918 to begin peace negotiations, cheering crowds, grateful for American intervention in the war's final months, greeted him. Some diplomats did not share in the popular adulation. French President Georges Clemenceau complained that "Wilson thinks he is another Jesus Christ come upon earth to reform men." And at the peace conference in Paris, Wilson found little support for a treaty based on his Fourteen Points. Italy, France, and Britain had suffered great losses, and their delegates to the conference focused on imposing severe penalties on Germany and promoting their own interests at their enemy's expense. The victors excluded both Germany and Russia from the peace conference.

A number of factors weakened Wilson's bargaining position. First, the United States had contributed least to the war, having declared war last, spent fewer of its national resources, and lost relatively few men. Second, Wilson refused to ally with European socialists, who offered the strongest opposition to the punitive peace treaty the Allied leaders envisioned. Third, Wilson compromised his commitment to self-determination when he agreed to the takeover of German colonies by the Allies. Continued U.S. intervention in the Caribbean, including the occupation of Haiti and the stationing of troops in Cuba in 1917, did not help matters. Irish Americans decried Wilson's acquiescence to the British, who refused to consider granting independence to Ireland. Finally, the president had just suffered political defeat at home; in the 1918 elections, the Republicans captured control of both houses of Congress.

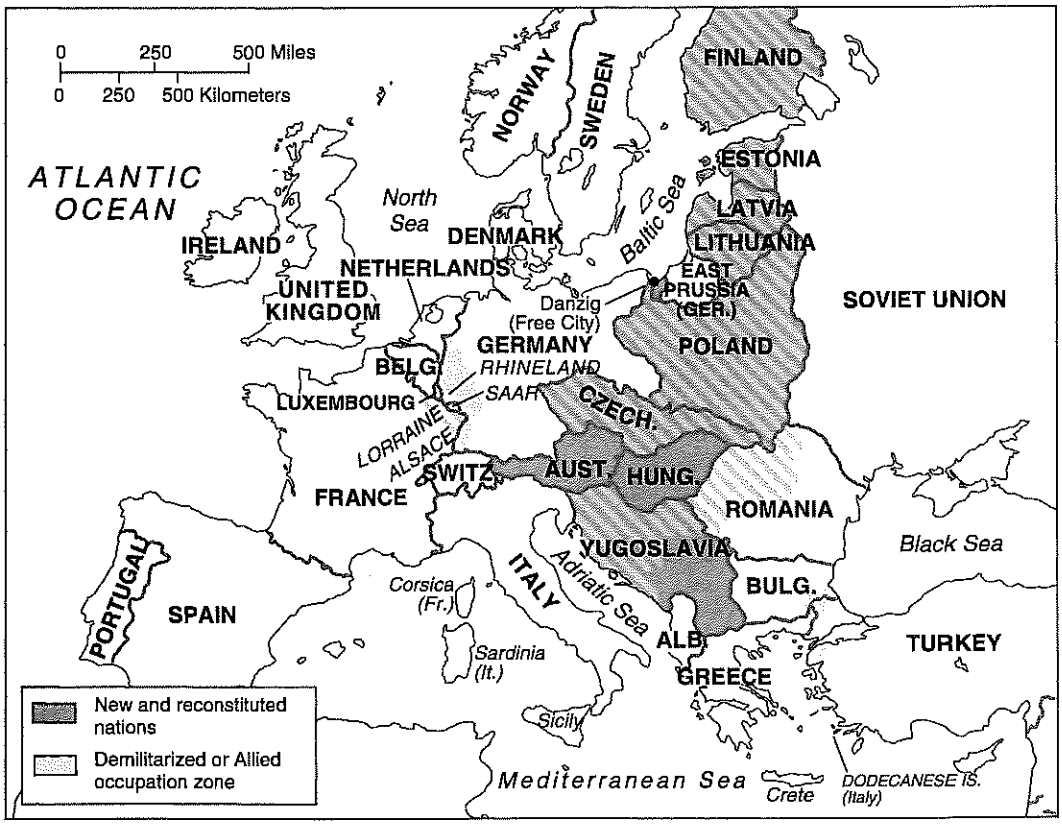
The treaty that was signed at Versailles forced Germany to acknowledge guilt for the war, to cede territory to other countries, and to make huge

reparation payments to the Allies for damage to their land and economies. To fulfill the national aspirations of various ethnic groups (and to surround Russia with hostile states), the treaty carved new countries—sometimes illogically—from the old Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires and from parts of Germany. The new nations of Austria, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, and Lithuania took their places on the redrawn map of postwar Europe (Map 6.6).

Wilson's major achievement at the conference was persuading the other Allies to include his plan for a League of Nations in the peace treaty. But when the president returned to Washington after months of bargaining, it became clear that Congress disapproved of the plan. Even before he presented the Versailles treaty to the U.S. Senate for ratification, isolationist Republicans, who believed that the United States should avoid foreign entanglements, voiced strong opposition. The treaty empowered the League—which was meant to resolve disputes and guarantee member nations' territorial integrity—to consider collective action in response to aggression. Opponents suggested that the League would restrain U.S.

MAP 6.6 Europe at the End of World War I

World War I dramatically reshaped Europe. Out of the defeated Central Powers — Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire — came a host of new nations. Russia, weakened by revolution, also lost territory.



foreign policy and that the treaty restricted congressional authority to declare war. Frustrated by lengthy hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Wilson embarked on a speaking tour in September 1919 to arouse popular support for the pact. Late that month, exhausted by the trip, he collapsed from a severe stroke. For the remaining seventeen months of his presidency, Wilson lay in bed, often unable to conduct business. The U.S. Senate twice refused to ratify the Versailles treaty and instead concluded separate peace treaties with the Central Powers. The League of Nations was established without U.S. participation, and it never became an effective force for peace.

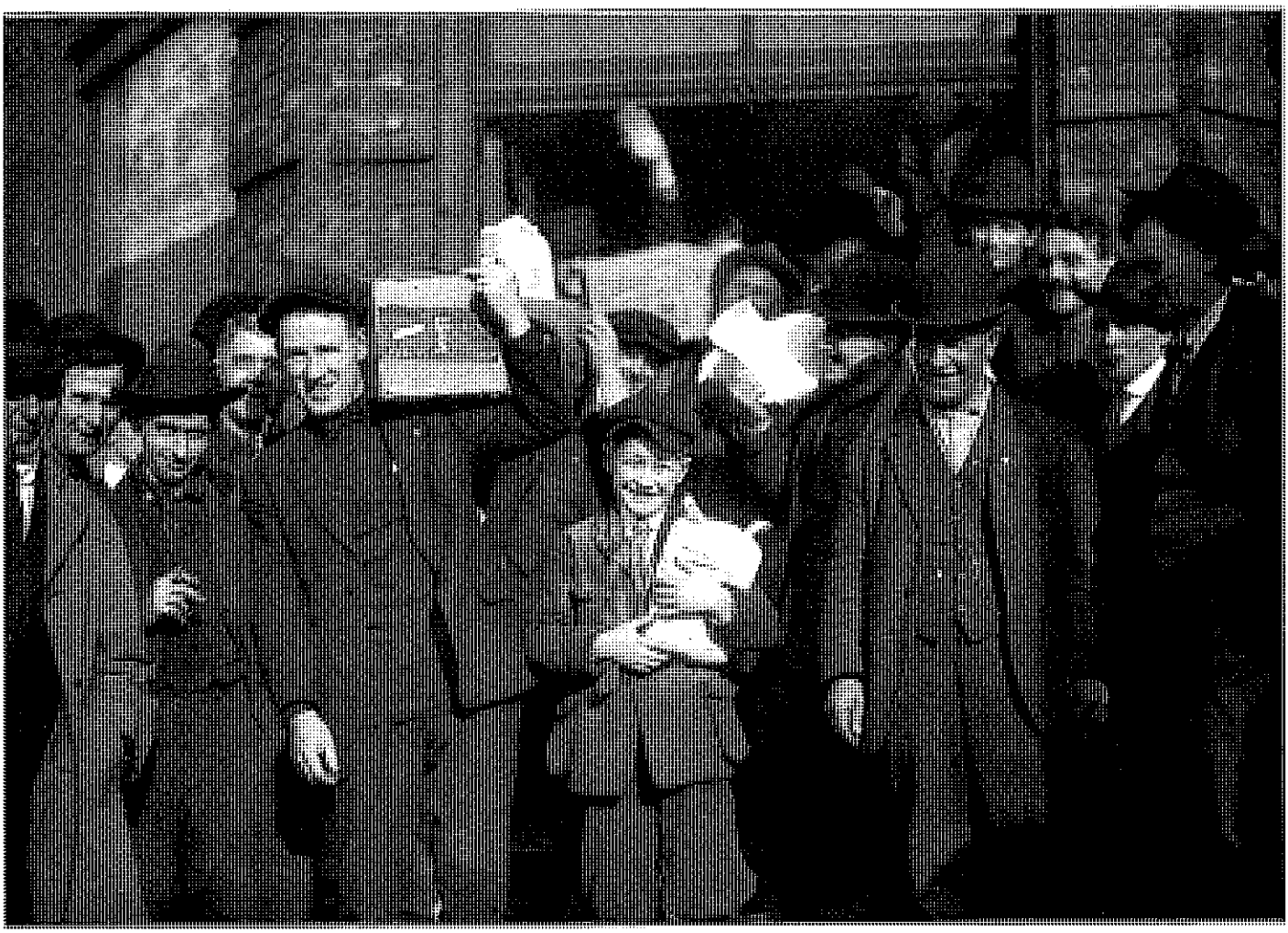
This May Be a Better Goddess Than Liberty — But We'll Have to Be Shown

A cartoon in the *New York Herald*, showing the Statue of Liberty replaced by an exotic statue resembling the Hindu goddess Kali, cast suspicion on the internationalism that the League of Nations espoused. Isolationist politicians and other opponents of the League raised fears that international organizations might restrain U.S. power and autonomy. William A. Rodgers, *New York Herald*, 1919 — American Social History Project.

Postwar Strikes and Race Riots

While Congress debated the Versailles treaty, strikes and riots erupted across the country. African Americans and workers sought to consolidate and expand gains they had won during the war, to make good on the war's democratic promise. Their opponents sought to roll back wartime advances. A series of titanic clashes rocked the nation. Four million workers — one-fifth of the nation's workforce — struck in 1919. Organized labor and political radicals put forth the most startling and fundamental challenge to the established order that had been seen in the twentieth century; business and government responded with a wave of repression.

In city after city and industry after industry, workers struck in 1919. In the Seattle General Strike, a General Strike Committee, which set up milk delivery for children and laundry service for hospitals and organized some 500 uniformed war veterans to patrol the streets, ran the city for five days. In New York, 50,000 men's clothing workers struck for thirteen weeks, winning a forty-four-hour workweek. Theater workers walked off stage, under the banner of Actors' Equity. In New England and New Jersey, 120,000 textile workers stayed away from their jobs. Striking women telephone operators in New England forced the Post Office Department, which still ran the nation's telephone system under wartime authority, to grant higher wages. Late in the year, 400,000 coal miners walked out, defying a plea from Wilson and a federal court injunction that barred them from striking. Despite determined federal efforts to put down the uprising, the miners

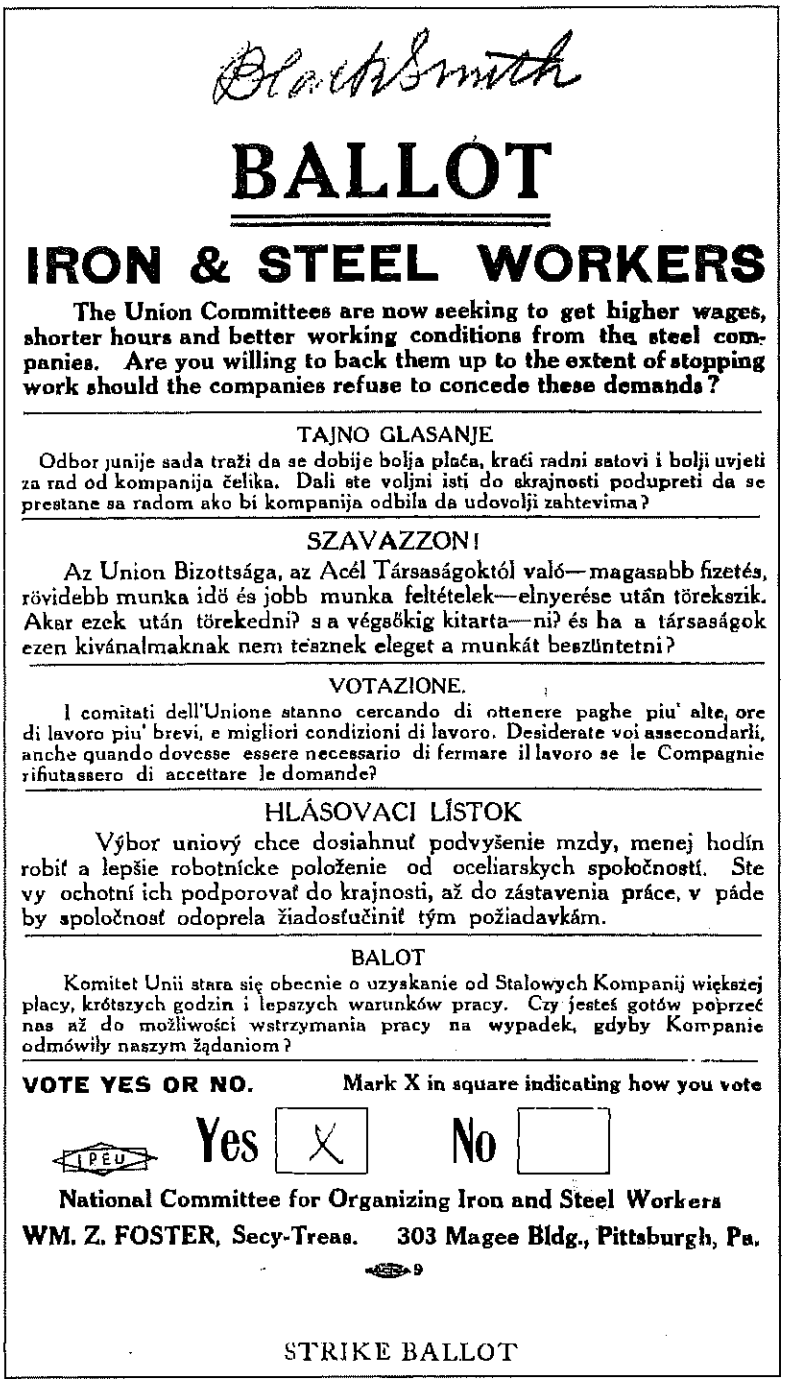


Feeding the General Strike
These strikers were photographed with groceries that the General Strike Committee had issued to union families.
Museum of History and Industry, Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society, Seattle, Washington.

stayed off the job until owners granted them an immediate wage hike of 14 percent and arbitration of their grievances.

In Boston, even the police struck, walking out when the police commissioner suspended nineteen officers who were leading a movement to affiliate with the AFL. During the walkout, the city was hit by a wave of rowdyism, theft, and violence. Massachusetts governor Calvin Coolidge, outraged, established a national reputation by announcing that none of the strikers would be rehired. Coolidge mobilized state troops while he recruited unemployed veterans for an entirely new police force.

Although the demands of these strikes centered on wages, hours, and other traditional issues, the radical spirit that had been evident during the war continued to pervade the labor movement. The war had given railroad workers and miners experience with coordinated bargaining and government administration of industry. In 1919, the railroad unions endorsed a plan for government ownership of all rail lines, and the United Mine Workers debated nationalization of the coal industry. The Bolshevik victory in



Blank Smith

BALLOT

IRON & STEEL WORKERS

The Union Committees are now seeking to get higher wages, shorter hours and better working conditions from the steel companies. Are you willing to back them up to the extent of stopping work should the companies refuse to concede these demands?

TAJNO GLASANJE

Odbor junije sada traži da se dobije bolja plaća, kraći radni satovi i bolji uvjeti za rad od kompanija čelika. Dali ste voljni isti do skrajnosti podupreti da se prestane sa radom ako bi kompanija odbila da udovolji zahtevima?

SZAVAZZON!

Az Union Bizottsága, az Acél Társaságoktól való—magasabb fizetés, rövidebb munka idö és jobb munka feltételek—elnyerése után törekszik. Akar ezek után törekedni? s a végsőkig kitarta—ni? és ha a társaságok ezen kivánalmaknak nem tésznek eleget a munkát beszüntetni?

VOTAZIONE.

I comitati dell'Unione stanno cercando di ottenere paghe piu' alte, ore di lavoro piu' brevi, e migliori condizioni di lavoro. Desiderate voi assecondarli, anche quando dovesse essere necessario di fermare il lavoro se le Compagnie rifiutassero di accettare le domande?

HLÁSOVACI LÍSTOK

Výbor uniový chce dosiahnuť podvyšenie mzdy, menej hodín robiť a lepšie robotnícke položenie od oceliarskych spoločností. Ste vy ochotní ich podporovať do krajnosti, až do zástavenia práce, v páde by spoločnosť odoprela žiadosťučiniť tým požiadavkám.

BALOT

Komitet Unii stara się obecnie o uzyskanie od Stalowych Kompanij większej płacy, krótszych godzin i lepszych warunków pracy. Czy jesteś gotów poprzeć nas aż do możliwości wstrzymania pracy na wypadek, gdyby Kompanie odmówiły naszym żądaniom?

VOTE YES OR NO. **Mark X in square indicating how you vote**

Yes [X] No [ ]

National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers

WM. Z. FOSTER, Secy-Treas. 303 Magee Bldg., Pittsburgh, Pa.

9

STRIKE BALLOT

How Do You Spell "Strike"?
The strike ballot distributed by the National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers — printed in English, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Slovak, and Polish — indicates the range of nationalities that contributed to the industry's workforce in 1919. William Z. Foster, *The Great Steel Strike and Its Lessons* (1920) — American Social History Project.

Russia and the growing strength of Britain's Labour Party encouraged their fervor. "Messiah is arriving," the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Sidney Hillman had written to his daughter the year before. "He may be with us any minute. . . . Labor will rule and the world will be free."

The most important strike of 1919 began in September, in the steel industry. Once again, working people took Wilson's democratic rhetoric farther than he intended. As a Hungarian-born steelworker named Frank Smith told a Senate Committee, "this is the United States and we ought to have the right to belong to the union." When the steel companies rejected

"We Ought to Have the Right to Belong to the Union"

The U.S. Senate Committee on Education and Labor set out to investigate the 1919 steel strike while it was still in progress. In his testimony before the committee, Hungarian-born Frank Smith, a Clairton worker, explains why he thought he had the right to a union.

STATEMENT OF FRANK SMITH

The CHAIRMAN. What is your nationality?

Mr. SMITH. I am a Hungarian.

The CHAIRMAN. You are not naturalized.

Mr. SMITH. No, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. How long have you been in this country?

Mr. SMITH. Thirteen years. The reason that I am not naturalized is that I have never stayed long enough in one place; stayed long enough to get my papers.

Senator MCKELLAR. Do you expect to be naturalized?

Mr. SMITH. Yes; I expect to be naturalized, of course, because I've got my family here, my woman, and I have five children; and I have that family, and I would like to know how a man is going to make a living for himself and his wife and five children on $4.73 a day.

The CHAIRMAN. How many hours do you work?

Mr. SMITH. I work 10 hours a day and I get paid for straight 10 hours time.

The CHAIRMAN. And how many days in the week do you work?

Mr. SMITH. Seven days—sometimes six days and sometimes seven days. . . .

The CHAIRMAN. Are you a union man?

Mr. SMITH. Yes, I am a union man.

The CHAIRMAN. Did they treat you in that way because you belonged to the union?

Mr. SMITH. Oh, they won't allow us there if they know that we are union men.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you sure about that?

Mr. SMITH. Yes; I am sure about that.

The CHAIRMAN. And you want the right to belong to the union, too?

Mr. SMITH. Yes, sir; we do. This is the United States and we ought to have the right to belong to the union.

Senator MCKELLAR. Did all of you boys buy Liberty bonds?

Mr. SMITH. Yes, sir; everyone of us. . . . We were all for the United States. We worked day and night for that . . .

Investigation of Strike in Steel Industries, Hearings before the Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. Senate, 66th Congress, 1st Session, vol. 1 (1919).

workers' demands, the unions struck. On September 22, more than 350,000 steelworkers left their jobs, shutting down virtually the entire industry in ten states. The steel companies responded by unleashing a reign of terror. Strikers and their supporters were beaten, arrested, shot, and driven out of steel towns. In Pittsburgh, the sheriff deputized 5,000 loyal U.S. Steel employees and prohibited outdoor meetings. In Clairton and Glassport, Pennsylvania, state troopers clubbed strikers who were attending peaceful gatherings.

The steel companies' refusal to meet with the unions, even at the president's request, won them widespread scorn. To gain popular sympathy, they portrayed the conflict as an attempted revolution by foreign-born radicals. They split the strikers along ethnic and racial lines by bringing in African American and Mexican American strikebreakers. And they launched campaigns to encourage skilled and native-born workers to go back to work. Many native-born skilled workers had joined the strike, but some—reflecting long-standing tensions between unskilled immigrants and skilled "American" workers—stood on the sidelines. Over time, growing numbers of skilled workers fell away from the strike. One Youngstown, Ohio, steelworker, John J. Martin, professed satisfaction at wages and working conditions, maintaining that "the foreigners brought the strike on." Slowly, the strike weakened; in January 1920, the union threw in the towel.

It was a terrible defeat. The immigrant steelworkers had demonstrated a capacity for sustained militancy and discipline, but the steel industry had shown itself capable of crushing even the most massive of walkouts. It would be fifteen years before the next major effort to organize basic industries such as steel, automobile, and electrical equipment manufacturing.

African Americans, too, found 1919 to be a cruel year. A resurgent Ku Klux Klan and other racist organizations urged terrorist attacks on black communities. Meanwhile, African Americans, many of them returning veterans, sought to defend the gains they had won during the war and redeem the war's democratic promise. The resulting tensions—over jobs, housing, and the basic position of black Americans in postwar society—erupted in twenty-five race riots during the second half of 1919. In July, whites attacked blacks in Washington, D.C., in a riot that killed six people and injured a hundred. Perhaps as many as twenty-five African Americans and several white people died in rural Arkansas, where black sharecroppers had begun to organize and arm themselves.

Chicago was the site of the worst riot. Like many racial clashes, it began on a hot summer day at a public facility—a beach—that was being shared uneasily by white and black bathers. When a young black swimmer drifted toward a white section of the beach, someone threw a rock and killed him. Fighting broke out and quickly spread to the city proper, fed by pent-up resentment over housing, job competition, and segregation. In the past, when white rioters had invaded black neighborhoods, the inhabitants had

"We Lost Everything but What We Had On"

The racial tensions in 1919 had begun during the war as working-class whites vented economic frustration against African American migrants taking jobs in war industries. In East St. Louis, Illinois, over several days, white mobs attacked African Americans who defended themselves, resulting in the deaths of thirty-nine African Americans and nine whites. In the following letter to a friend, a victim of the 1917 East St. Louis riot recounted the terror of being caught in the middle of the violence.

3946 W. Belle
St. Louis, Mo.
Dearest Louise:

Was very glad to hear from you. Your letter was forwarded from what used to be my house.

Louise, it was awful. I hardly know where to begin telling you about it. First I will say we lost everything but what we had on and that was very little. . . .

It started early in the afternoon. We kept receiving calls over the phone to pack our trunks and leave, because it was going to be awful. We did not heed the calls, but sent grandma & the baby on to St. Louis & said we would "stick" no matter what happened. At first, when the fire started, we stood on Broadway & watched it. As they neared our house we went in & went to the basement. It was too late to run then. They shot & yelled some thing awful, finally they reached our house. At first, they did not bother us (we watched from the basement window), they remarked that "white people live in that house, this is not a nigger house." Later, someone must have tipped them that it was a "nigger" house, because, after leaving us for about 20 min[utes] they returned & yelling like mad "kill the 'niggers,' burn that house."

It seemed the whole house was falling in on us. Then some one said, they must not be there, if they are they are certainly dead. Then some one shouted "they are in the basement. Surround them and burn it down. . . ." Then they ran down our steps. Only prayer saved us, we were under tubs & any thing we could find praying & keeping as quiet as possible, because if they had seen one face, we would have been shot or burned to death. When they were about to surround the house and burn it, we heard an awful noise & thought they were dynamiting the house. (The Broadway Theater fell in, we learned later.) Sister tipped the door to see if the house was on fire. She saw the reflection of a soldier on the front door—pulled it open quickly & called for help. All of us ran out then & was taken to the city hall for the night—(just as we were). The next morning we . . . were sent on to St. Louis. Had to walk across the bridge with a line of soldiers on each side . . . in the hot sun, no hats, & and scarcely no clothing. . . .

On Tuesday evening . . . our house was burned with two soldiers on guard. . . . We were told that [the crowd] looted the house before burning it. . . .

Robert Asher, "Document of the Race Riot at East St. Louis," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1972).

hidden or fled. But in 1919, black Chicagoans fought back, refusing to accept second-class citizenship. Full-scale battles erupted along the borders between black and white neighborhoods. By the time the violence ended five days later, 38 people had died and more than 500 had been injured.

The Red Scare and American Civil Liberties The mobilization of municipal police forces, state militias, and federal courts against strikers and rioters was part of a larger postwar offensive against radicals and labor militants, which focused on the foreign-born. "Loyalty" organizations intensified their antiradical crusade, even though the worldwide advance of radicalism—often associated with the Bolshevik Revolution—had been largely checked by fall 1919, after an attempted revolution was violently suppressed in Germany and a Soviet government was toppled in Hungary.

Under the Stars and Stripes
Daily representations of subversion and menace, such as this Bolshevik serpent in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, also carried a strong anti-immigrant message, fueling the 1919 Red scare. Morgan, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 13, 1919 — American Social History Project.

In the United States, the radical movement had been seriously weakened. The IWW was feeble, its energies drained by defending members who were facing trial on wartime charges. The socialist movement had splintered, weakened by repression, Debs's imprisonment, and internal disagreements. In the summer of 1919, the party split. One faction kept the name Socialist Party and continued to field candidates, believing that they could win enough votes to legislate democratic control of the economy. Debs received nearly a million votes for president in 1920, running from his cell in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. A small group modeled on the Bolsheviks went underground to organize a revolutionary movement and eventually established the U.S. Communist Party.

American radicals posed little threat to the status quo, but their opponents were unrelenting. Foremost among the "Red hunters" was Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, who led arrests and deportations of thousands of immigrants and radicals. Most had never been charged with a crime. Some, like the well-known anarchist Emma Goldman, had lived in the United States for decades. The largest of the "Palmer raids" took place in January 1920: in one night, federal agents arrested 6,000 alleged radicals in

After the Execution — Boston, August 1927
Thousands of mourners follow behind the funeral carriages of Sacco and Vanzetti. *Labor Defender*, August 1928 — American Social History Project.

thirty-three cities. They held many without warrants or formal charges and prevented them from contacting lawyers or relatives. Some of them had no connection to radical activities; others signed coerced confessions. Officials eventually deported 600 of them.

The excesses of the January raids eroded support for the anti-Red campaign. The Labor Department, which had legal jurisdiction over alien deportations, stopped cooperating with the Justice Department. Palmer finally overplayed his hand when he warned that revolutionaries were planning a wave of violence on May Day. Police mobilized to protect buildings and political leaders, but the day passed quietly. Discredited, the anti-Red drive went into decline.

Nevertheless, the Justice Department continued its antilabor, antiradical activities until 1924, working closely with state governments, businesses, and private detective agencies. Military intelligence agents issued an infamous Spider-Web Chart showing connections between activists in national women's organizations, including the American Home Economics Association and the Parent-Teachers Association, as well as political and pacifist groups. The chart implied that they were all part of an international socialist conspiracy.

One case in particular would keep the issue of political repression alive for much of the 1920s. Two Italian-born anarchists, shoemaker Nicola Sacco and fish peddler Bartolomeo Vanzetti, were arrested on May 5, 1920, and charged with killing two men during an armed robbery in South Braintree, Massachusetts. Both men professed their innocence, insisting that they were being persecuted for their political beliefs. Following a trial that was marred by questionable evidence and judicial procedures, the court convicted Sacco and Vanzetti of first-degree murder and sentenced them to death.

For many people in the United States and abroad, Sacco and Vanzetti's case came to symbolize governmental injustice. Protests flared, first among Italian Americans, then among non-Italian radicals, and finally among a broad spectrum of intellectuals and civil libertarians. Under pressure, the governor of Massachusetts appointed a committee of prominent citizens to review the case, but it found no reason to reverse the sentence. On August 23, 1927, as crowds gathered throughout the world to protest, Sacco and Vanzetti were executed. A few months before he died, Vanzetti offered an eloquent summary of his case. His words, as rendered by a New York reporter, were "If it had not been for these thing, I might have live out of my life, talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by an accident."

Conclusion: Toward a Postwar Society

World War I began as the culmination of long-standing European rivalries, but it ended in a political and economic crisis that seemed to threaten the very existence of capitalism. The war undercut the moral, political, and economic bases of all the old European regimes. In Russia, the collapse was complete: a revolutionary socialist government replaced the tsarist regime and in 1924 officially became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In half a dozen other countries, revolutions were either attempted or threatened. Never before had the foundations of capitalism seemed so shaky.

America's domestic battles in 1919 were part of this larger struggle over the shape of the postwar world. For a brief moment during and just after the war, progressives thought their hopes for domestic reform and international order might be realized, and radicals thought socialism might spread beyond the Soviet Union. But neither of these came to pass. Indeed, U.S. isolationism and the failure of the peace helped to set the stage for another global confrontation twenty years later.

The United States was nevertheless forever changed by the war. The government continued to play a larger role in the economy, in labor relations, and in shaping public opinions. Workers continued to move from the South to the North and West and from Mexico to the southwestern United States. Women gained the vote. Although alien radicals were silenced or deported and wartime suspicion of "foreigners" contributed to the end of open immigration a few years later, most immigrants continued to think of themselves as full-fledged Americans.

When the war ended, so did many of the conditions that favored working-class activism and the development of strong, radical unions. As production levels returned to normal and four million military men reentered the civilian workforce, the labor shortage abated. Intolerance, fear of foreigners, and a dread of radicalism played into employers' hands. Factional bickering and government repression weakened labor and its radical allies, while wartime profits bolstered corporations, enabling them to withstand long interruptions in production. By the early 1920s, businessmen no longer had to deal with a confident, politicized working-class movement. It would be well over a decade before the labor movement would again be able to exert its power nationally.

The Years in Review

1914

- President Woodrow Wilson sends troops to occupy the Mexican port of Vera Cruz in response to a diplomatic slight.
- A Serbian nationalist assassinates the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne and precipitates World War I; the United States declares neutrality.

1915

- President Wilson endorses military "preparedness."
- Germany begins submarine warfare in February; 128 Americans die when the *Lusitania* is torpedoed in May; a huge public outcry follows.
- U.S. Marines begin a nineteen-year occupation of Haiti.

1916

- Brigadier General John J. Pershing leads 6,000 men into Mexico in an unsuccessful pursuit of General Francisco "Pancho" Villa.
- An estimated 700,000 soldiers die in the German offensive at Verdun.
- U.S. Marines begin an eight-year occupation of the Dominican Republic.
- Running under the slogan "He kept us out of war," Wilson wins reelection, defeating Charles E. Hughes.
- The Industrial Workers of the World finds new life by organizing western migratory workers but also faces sharp government attacks.
- Southern farmers suffer as boll weevils attack their cotton crops and floods cause extensive damage.
- Increasing numbers of African Americans leave the South in the Great Migration, which sends 500,000 north over the course of the decade.

- The Revenue Acts of 1916 and 1917 impose the first substantial income taxes.

1917

- The United States enters World War I in April; the draft begins in May; the first U.S. troops reach France in June.
- Women in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston take to the streets to protest wartime inflationary price hikes for food and other necessities.
- White rioters attack black neighborhoods of East St. Louis for two days in July; 40 African Americans and 9 white people are killed.
- The federal government sets up the Committee on Public Information to disseminate war news and government propaganda.
- The Russian tsar is overthrown in the March revolution; in October, the Bolshevik Party, headed by V. I. Lenin, seizes power.
- The National Woman's Party pickets the White House, demanding that "democracy should begin at home."
- The Espionage Act gives federal authorities wide powers to suppress dissent.

1918

- Wilson issues his statement of war aims, the Fourteen Points.
- U.S. troops push back German troops in France's Argonne forest in America's major contribution to the fighting.
- The German army, exhausted by an offensive the previous spring, collapses, and an armistice is signed in November; more than thirteen million people died in the conflict.
- "Spanish" influenza spreads through Europe, Asia, and America, killing twenty-two million people in the worst epidemic since the Black Death in the Middle Ages.

1919

- The Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, banning manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, is ratified.
- The Treaty of Versailles, including Wilson's proposed League of Nations, is signed in Paris; the U.S. Senate refuses to ratify it.
- Four million workers—fully one-fifth of the nation's workforce—strike; more than 300,000 steelworkers stage the biggest strike and suffer the worst defeat.
- Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer begins a campaign to eliminate radicals, or "Reds," from U.S. politics.
- Race riots sweep through the nation, killing 6 people in Washington, D.C., and 38 in Chicago.

1920

- The Nineteenth Amendment is ratified on August 26, granting suffrage to women.
- Italian-born anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti are arrested for murder and convicted in a judicially flawed trial.
- In the largest "Palmer raid," federal agents arrest 6,000 radicals in thirty-three cities, culminating in wholesale violations of civil liberties.

1924

- Soviet Constitution officially forms the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

1927

- Sacco and Vanzetti are executed, despite worldwide protest.

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